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ABSTRACT

SERVE, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, is a consortium of educational organizations whose mission is to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the southeastern United States. This handbook is a compilation of various approaches, strategies, models, and programs that schools and school districts can use for successful educational improvement. Section 1 provides a brief discussion of the research on how schools change and what internal and external factors must be considered before a school begins the reform process. Of particular importance is procuring the involvement of all school staff. Section 2, the main body of the document, is comprised of four subsections. The first subsection profiles school- and district-based approaches for restructuring that are initiated and managed by the local site with assistance from an outside agency. The second subsection looks at some of the newest ideas for schoolwide reform proposed by private companies or charter-school policies that require outside management of schools. Subsection 3 describes theories or broad concepts about education and management that can serve as the basis for practical decisions about change. The fourth subsection details curriculum-based approaches to change that focus on immediate change in the classroom but may also lead to more widespread reform. Section 3 includes a directory of organizations, publications, and contacts to assist readers in their efforts to understand the options for school reform and to take action. Schools are encouraged to consider integrating a combination of programs that complement and supplement each other. Suggested readings and contacts for further information are included throughout the document, and references accompany each section. Appendices contain sample worksheets, instruments, and reprints of relevant SERVE articles. (LMI)

SERVE

ED 397 472

Resources for School Improvement

How to Improve Schools Now

- *Ready Resources*
- *Essential Concepts*
- *Effective Programs*
- *Case Studies*

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SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education

Resources for School Improvement

by
Stephanie Kadel-Taras
1996

SERVE
SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education

Associated with the School of Education,
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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About the SERVE Organization

SERVE, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, is a consortium of educational organizations whose mission is to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast. Formed by a coalition of business leaders, governors, policymakers, and educators seeking systemic, lasting improvement in education, the organization is governed and guided by a Board of Directors that includes the chief state school officers, governors, and legislative representatives from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Committed to creating a shared vision of the future of education in the Southeast, the consortium impacts educational change by addressing critical educational issues in the region, acting as a catalyst for positive change, and serving as a resource to individuals and groups striving for comprehensive school improvement.

SERVE's core component is a regional educational laboratory funded since 1990 by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Building from this core, SERVE has developed a system of programs and initiatives that provides a spectrum of resources, services, and products for responding effectively to national, regional, state and local needs. SERVE is a dynamic force, transforming national education reform strategies into progressive policies and viable initiatives at all levels. SERVE Laboratory programs and key activities are centered around:

- Applying research and development related to improving teaching, learning and organizational management
- Serving the educational needs of young children and their families more effectively;
- Providing field and information services to promote and assist local implementation of research-based practices and programs
- Offering policy services, information, and assistance to decision makers concerned with developing pogressive educational policy
- Connecting educators to a regional computerized communication system, so that they may search for and share information, and network
- Developing and disseminating publications and products designed to give educators practical information and the latest research on common issues and problems

The Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Consortium at SERVE is part of the national infrastructure for the improvement of mathematics and science education sponsored by OERI. The consortium coordinates resources, disseminates exemplary instructional materials, and provides technical assistance for implementing teaching methods and assessment tools.

The SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIRTEC) serves 14 states and territories. A seven-member partnership led by SERVE, the consortium offers a variety of services to foster the infusion of technology into K-12 classrooms. The Region IV Comprehensive Assistance Center provides a coordinated, comprehensive approach to technical assistance through its partnership with SERVE.

A set of special purpose institutes completes the system of SERVE resources. These institutes provide education stakeholders extended site-based access to high quality professional development programs; evaluation and assessment services; training and policy development to improve school safety; and subject area or project-specific planning and implementation assistance to support clients' school improvement goals.

Following the distributive approach to responding and providing services to its customers, SERVE has ten offices in the region. The North Carolina office at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is headquarters for the Laboratory's executive services and operations. Policy offices are located in the departments of education in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and in the Florida office in Tallahassee. This document includes contact information for SERVE programs, services, and institutes.

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Clearinghouse
800-352-3747

Math Science Consortium
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The SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium
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Comprehensive Assistance Center
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Evaluation & Assessment Institute
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Southeastern Professional Development Institute
404-577-7737

Southeastern Regional Safe Schools Institute
910-378-0011

Special Projects Institute
910-378-0456

About SERVE's Hot Topic Series

SERVE offers a Hot Topic series. Each research-based publication focuses on an issue of present relevance and imporatnce in education in the region and is a practical guidebook for educators. Each is developed with input from experts in the field; is focused on a well-defined subject; and offers useful information, resources, descriptions of exemplary programs, and a list of contacts.

This Hot Topic, *Resources for School Improvement*, targets approaches, strategies, and models that schools can use for successful educational improvement. This publication can be consulted on an on-going basis to find practices and ideas that educators can shape to their school's need.

Several Hot Topics like *Resources for School Improvement* are developed by SERVE each year. The following Hot Topics are available:

Appreciating Differences: Teaching and Learning in a Culturally Diverse Classroom
Comprehensive School Improvement
Interagency Collaboration: Improving the Delivery of Services to Children and Families
Learning by Serving: A Compendium of Ideas for Service Learning
Problem-Centered Learning in Mathematics and Science
Reducing School Violence: Building a Framework for School Safety
Reengineering High Schools for Student Success
Schools for the 21st Century: New Roles for Teachers and Principals
Technology Infrastructure in Schools
Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning
Youth Apprenticeship: A School-to-Work Transition Program

Information on how to order these and other publications is available in the back of this Hot Topic.

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Introduction

Although teachers and administrators, in general, have always tried to meet students' needs and do the best job possible, societal changes, community expectations, and systemic constraints have brought educators to the realization that comprehensive school improvement is necessary. Many state policies require schools to develop long-term reform plans and create school improvement teams, and the federal government emphasizes change in every aspect of the educational system. If schools and local districts are going to be in control of the changes that are expected of them, they will have to begin formulating and implementing plans for improvement right away. This publication is intended to help educators do just that. The information provided will allow educators to act on their role of, as Block (1995) puts it, "publicly accountable, yet professionally self-determined practitioners" (p. 13).

Resources for School Improvement is a compilation of various approaches, strategies, models, and programs that schools and school districts can use for successful educational improvement. Principals, district administrators, teachers, parents, and community representatives who are seeking to lead school improvement efforts will find this book to be a useful reference and catalog of ideas. The resources include programs that guide a school through the change process, projects that suggest specific instructional or organizational changes for specific results, theoretical models that undergird improvement efforts, and curricular changes in individual subjects that may lead to further reform. Suggested readings and contacts for further information are included throughout the document to allow readers to follow up on any of the ideas that intrigue them.

This publication is organized to allow readers to quickly focus their search for information:

Section I

What do We Know About Successful School Change?

provides a brief discussion of the research on how schools change and what internal and external factors must be considered before a school begins the reform process. It also clarifies that educators should not make a decision about what reform approach they might want to use until all school staff have been involved in discussions about the school and its purposes and problems. No school should begin the journey of school reform without first gaining an understanding of how change impacts all stakeholders and a variety of adoption patterns.

Section II

Resources for Comprehensive School Change

is the main body of this document. It includes four subsections:

Comprehensive Change Managed Internally profiles school- and district-based approaches for restructuring that are initiated and managed by the local site with assistance from an outside agency.

Comprehensive Change Through Management Innovations looks at some of the newest ideas for school-wide reform proposed by private companies or charter school policies that require new/outside management of schools and of change at the local level.

Catalyst Ideas for Change describes theories or broad concepts about education and management that can serve as the basis for practical decisions about change.

Curriculum-Based Approaches to Change briefly describes a number of curriculum programs or instructional improvements that focus on immediate change in the classroom but may also lead to more widespread reform.

Section III

Additional Resources

includes a variety of organizations, publications, and contacts which may further assist readers in their efforts to understand the options for school reform and to take action.

Decisions about what approaches to include in this publication were based on suggestions from educators in the Southeast including SERVE's field representatives who travel to schools throughout the region to learn what schools are doing and what assistance they need. Although most of the approaches included in this publication are fairly well known and widespread in their use, none of the programs was measured against certain criteria of excellence, and SERVE does not officially endorse them. However, most of the program descriptions include evidence of the effectiveness of the approach. Readers should also note that this is by no means an exhaustive list of all the strategies and programs that are available to assist educators.

Program Integration

Schools are encouraged to consider the wisdom of integrating programs in order to address the varied roles of schooling. Block, Everson, and Guskey (1995), in their book on school improvement programs, advocate this, pointing out that, "No one program is. . . likely to serve all your school improvement needs. . . Various programs might supplement and complement one another and. . .generate a school improvement plan whose whole is more than the sum of its individual programmatic parts" (p. xv). Block et al. (1995) recommend analyzing the strengths and complementary possibilities between a school's existing and proposed programs for improvement by looking at how well each addresses the following "big variables" of schooling:

- Assessment
- Climate (culture, norms, and order in a school or classroom)
- Community/Parent Involvement
- Curriculum
- Expectations (beliefs about student success and staff capability)
- Facilities
- Instruction
- Leadership
- Motivation (any school member's incentive to act)
- Organization/Management (strategies and guidelines that provide structure to a classroom or school)

(Everson, 1995, p. 442).

Guskey (1995) suggests that the "results achieved with a well-conceived combination of innovations are likely to be greater than those attained using any single one" (p. 463). Schools working with programs described in this document may find that mixing various ideas later overviewed in this document allows them to make the best use of each. For example, one could use the Onward to Excellence model for change with an outcome-based emphasis or seek help from the Program for School Improvement while implementing Success for All. Readers may find that bits and pieces from various approaches will fit well into their school's ongoing improvement efforts.

This publication is intended to complement a previous SERVE *Hot Topics* publication—*Comprehensive School Improvement*—which detailed the *process* of school change as determined by research and practice. That document discussed important concerns such as creating a school improvement team and setting goals. *Resources for School Improvement* provides the critical resource for schools undergoing change by focusing on some of the many *programs* available to assist the process and provide solutions to problems.

SERVE has endeavored to provide an overview to assist educators and change agents in making informed choices among the myriad ideas for school improvement. We encourage readers to peruse the range of options described here, read some of the profiles in-depth, and call relevant organizations for further information. We hope this reference tool will make the school improvement process a little easier.

References

Block, J. H. (1995). School improvement: A program perspective. In J. H. Block, S. T. Everson, & T. R. Guskey (Eds.), *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders* (pp. 3-18). New York: Scholastic.

Block, J. H., Everson, S. T., & Guskey, T. R. (Eds.). (1995). *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders*. New York: Scholastic.

Everson, S. T. (1995). Selecting school improvement programs. In J. H. Block, S. T. Everson, & T. R. Guskey (Eds.), *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders* (pp. 433-452). New York: Scholastic.

Guskey, T. R. (1995). Integrating school improvement programs. In J. H. Block, S. T. Everson, & T. R. Guskey (Eds.), *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders* (pp. 453-472). New York: Scholastic.

Section I

What do We Know About Successful School Change?

"It took us five years of learning how to work together and to be successful without initiatives before we were ready to tackle the really tough problems with student populations in our school. Now we understand how to work through things, to learn together and do what it takes to succeed."

—A principal

(Quoted in Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, and Wolf, 1995, p. 13)

As top-down methods of school reform give way to site-based management and shared decision making about school restructuring, principals and teachers are faced with the empowering yet enormous task of deciding what to do to make schools better places for everyone to work and learn. Although school improvement is a long and complex process, research has provided schools with tools and suggestions to help them get started, stay on track, and see results (Barth, 1990; Elmore, 1990; Fullan, 1991; Goodlad, 1984; Louis and Miles, 1990; Sizer, 1992). One important piece of advice that has come from experiences and studies of schools undergoing reform is that restructuring plans and processes must fit within the culture, organizational structure, and needs of the school. Even in an era of shared decision making, there will be laws, rules, regulations, and school board policies that must be considered. School boards and administrative decision makers must be seen and used as resources for school improvement. These points must be kept in mind as one reviews the programs, strategies, approaches, and resources described in this document.

Learning about the available options for school improvement and selecting among them are clearly two different challenges. Although many of the ideas included in this publication may serve as tools for the restructuring process, choosing an approach must come after careful study of the school's current situation, including improvement needs, available resources, and staff readiness for change. A few of the strategies in this document are targeted toward reform at the district level, but the same requirement for a match between reform strategies and local needs applies. Some schools or districts may find that integrating two or more approaches will work best, others may discover that they need to make initial changes in management or problem-solving capacities before implementing a reform strategy, and still others may know about a locally designed approach that will serve them better than any of the approaches discussed here.

One way to match the method of reform to the school is through a process of "mutual adaptation," a common practice in schools that have successfully implemented a new program or reform (McLaughlin, 1976). Mutual adaptation refers to the simultaneous modification of the project design, the institutional setting (classroom or school) and the individuals (teachers, principals, and others) involved in the implementation process. In other words, school staff

> ***"Any approach to school improvement brings with it certain visions of what it means to educate and learn and to be a student or a teacher."***
>
> (Little, 1993)

are encouraged to make changes in the strategy or program they are using at the same time that they are expected to make changes in their school. This is not only encouraged but probably necessary for success. Says McLaughlin (1976) of her findings, "Unless adaptations were made in the original plans or technologies, implementation tended to be superficial or symbolic, and significant change in participants did not occur" (p. 341). Local variability in an innovation is inevitable, because every school is distinct. Accordingly, most of the strategies profiled in this document provide process suggestions and basic principles but allow the programmatic details to be decided by each school.

Mutual adaptation is one aspect of successful change that research has uncovered, but much more is known about what processes and priorities will make school reform more likely to succeed. In the following pages, a number of general suggestions for school improvement will be discussed to help schools (and districts) prepare for the process of change and make informed decisions about what kinds of assistance or reform strategies they will find most helpful.

Change is a Process

Real school change is not a one-time event but an ongoing process of continual improvement of school practices and of the individuals in the school community. Lasting change happens gradually over a long period of time. At the same time, however, if change is planned, instead of random reactions to problems, the process must be managed as a sequence of events. Changes throughout the organization need to be coordinated.

The following are some "do" and "don't" assumptions to guide schools through the change process:

- Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the only way; instead, assume that the process of change will allow you to interact and exchange ideas with others.
- Assume that any significant innovation requires implementers to work out their own meaning of the change through practice with the ideas.
- Assume that conflict and disagreement are necessary for successful, lasting change.
- Assume that pressure is needed for change but that pressure will only be effective when the time and resources to engage in a relearning process are made available.
- Assume that effective change will take time.
- Do not assume that lack of implementation results from rejection of the idea or resistance to change; other reasons may be that resources are lacking, that implementers have an inadequate understanding of the ideas, or that not enough time has elapsed.
- Do not expect all people or groups to change; concentrate on accomplishments with those who have changed instead of on how far you still have to go.
- Assume that you will need a plan for change and that this plan will evolve throughout the change process.
- Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken.
- Assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations (Fullan, 1991, pp. 105-107).

A case study of an elementary school, written by Boyd and Hord (1994), provides a realistic and inspiring picture of the long-term and gradual nature of school change. It is an especially good example of how improvement builds on itself by accumulating the wisdom of various leaders. With the authors' permission, "Schools as Learn-

ing Communities" has been reprinted in the appendix.

Commitment to Change Must Be Built and Individuals Must Be Supported

Change is a process that is clearly accomplished by individuals, not merely institutions, and is a personal experience of growth and development (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall, 1987). Thus, individuals will need time to build commitment to a change and will need to be supported throughout the process. Change is always accompanied by uncertainty and anxiety, as well as the hope of success, so school staff have to be willing to move slowly through the process to allow time for easing concerns. As members of the school community share their visions for change with one another and begin to develop new habits of mind, many school staff may need to be convinced of the need for change. Most will need time to develop a sense of readiness (Conley, 1993). As Fullan emphasizes, "If we constantly remind ourselves that educational change is a *learning experience for the adults involved* (teachers, administrators, parents, etc.) as well as for children, we will be going a long way in understanding the dynamics of the factors of change" (Fullan, 1991, p. 66).

Any approach to school improvement brings with it certain visions of what it means to educate and learn and to be a student or a teacher (Little, 1993). Significant change usually requires questioning old beliefs and assumptions, which may be difficult to uncover, and then developing new values along with new skills. Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone (1993) point out that, when a change is proposed, "a considerable period of time must be available for the subsequent interpretive process—the give and take among conscience, intentions, and actions—to take place" (p. 131). As educators engage in this interpretive process, they need to feel the support of their colleagues and believe that professional risk-taking is encouraged by administrators (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

Change agents often find that individuals vary in their rate of adoption of an idea (Rogers, 1971):

Innovators are risk takers who are the first to adopt an idea and are often perceived by some as a little naive or crazy.

Leaders are progressive practitioners whose opinions and advice are trusted by other staff; they are willing to try ideas if they are clear on how the innovations have been successful in the past.

Early Majority and Late Majority Adopters are the two groups who make up most of the staff in a school; they eventually adopt the idea (some sooner than others) but tend to be skeptical at first, do not seek out the information on their own, and are more receptive to one-on-one communication than large-group meetings.

Resisters are suspicious of new ideas and unlikely to ever adopt an innovation.

Hord et al. (1987) point out that a critical step in building commitment for change is making sure that all school staff understand exactly what the innovation, program, or approach is. This means not only clarifying its goals, philosophy, and implementation requirements, but setting out its major components clearly and succinctly. As potential implementers learn about these components, Hord and her colleagues have found that educators typically move through a series of "Stages of Concern" about a possible change:

Stage 1—Informational
The individual would like to know more about the innovation.

Stage 2—Personal
The individual is concerned about how the change will affect him or her personally and about his or her ability to implement it.

Stage 3—Management
The individual is concerned about logistics, finding time and materials, and just keeping up with the change.

Stage 4—Consequence
The individual is concerned about the effects that the change is having for students.

Stage 5—Collaboration
The individual is concerned about relating his or her work with the change to what other educators are doing.

Stage 6—Refocusing
The individual has developed ideas about how to improve the innovation or has created even better alternatives.

Visionary Leadership is Essential for Successful Change

Numerous studies on school restructuring and implementation of innovations have emphasized that competent leadership is critical for successful change (Fullan, 1991; Hord and Huling-Austin, 1986; Louis and Miles, 1990). Deal (1990) asserts that, "nothing will happen without leadership. From someone—or someplace—energy needs to be created, released, channeled, or mobilized to get the ball rolling in the right direction" (p. 4). Leaders of change—whether they be principals, district superintendents, school board members, teachers, or a team of school staff—need to ensure that school improvement is a high priority relative to other changes. Such leaders must be willing to take risks, able to handle complexity, and comfortable with ambiguity. Leaders provide both pressure and support—they simultaneously push and pull—as school staff work toward change (Hord, 1992).

Hord (1992) makes the distinction between managing (making choices, allocating resources, organizing) and leading (persuading, influencing, inspiring), and this distinction draws attention to the need for leaders who maintain and communicate a vision. Méndez-Morse (1993) defines vision as "a force that provides meaning and purpose to the work of an organization. Vision is a compelling picture of the future that inspires commitment" (p. 1). Although leaders are the keepers of the vision, it is not something that they decide and impose upon school staff. Teachers and administrators must work together to develop a shared vision that encompasses teachers' classroom- and student-focused priorities and administrators' outcome- and public-focused priorities.

Another important purpose for leadership is to accept and communicate the reality that change takes time and that significant improvements may not be noticed right away. As Tushnet (1992) reminds school change leaders, "By providing the perspective that change takes time, the programs protect the school participants from demands for immediate payoff. In schools with major problems, this protection may also serve as a morale booster for teachers [who] have the space to attend to problems without being criticized for their failures" (p. 6).

Hord and Huling-Austin (1986) studied the activities of principals whose schools were involved in implementing a new curriculum. They found that,

> The variable that correlated most significantly with implementation success was the . . . principal's change-facilitating style. Translated this meant that the more the principal held and communicated a vision of what the school could become and pushed staff to implement the vision thereby improving their practice so that students would gain, and, the more the principal supported teachers and worked with them in their change efforts, the higher the implementation success of the teachers. (Hord, 1994, p. 3)

From their research, Hord and Huling-Austin (1986) developed six classifications of interventions that leaders provide to assist implementation of change:

"As implementers move from novices to more experienced users of innovations, their needs continue to change, and leaders provide the necessary support and training."

- *Creating an atmosphere and culture for change*
  As one kind of leader, principals promote change by bringing staff together to share ideas. They encourage risk-taking, seek out learning opportunities for staff, encourage inquiry and shared decision making, and address conflicts quickly. They also maintain school traditions and rituals that promote unity and a positive culture. In their leadership role, superintendents value principals who seek change rather than maintain the status quo; they also nurture creativity and keep the public informed of change efforts.
- *Developing and communicating the vision*
  Leaders build a vision for success with the help of staff and consistently articulate and set priorities based on this vision. Staff are rewarded for contributing ideas and practices that work toward the vision.
- *Planning and providing resources*
  Leaders set and work toward goals but allow for evolutionary planning. They always search for new opportunities, keep on top of emerging data that may require detours, and encourage more ambitious efforts as new capacities are built. Leaders also ensure that material resources and time for planning and training are obtained and allocated to maximize effective change. Principals and district-level administrators are responsible for identifying and addressing structural constraints—such as scheduling conflicts—that hamper improvement.
- *Providing training and development*
  Leaders recognize that professional development is necessary for lasting change. They participate in staff development by actively helping plan, conduct, and evaluate training.
- *Monitoring and checking progress*
  Leaders regularly note what is working and what is not as change is implemented; they acknowledge problems and act quickly to make adjustments. In addition to formal measures of outcomes, leaders use informal methods to gather information on how change is progressing, such as walking the halls, attending department meetings, and engaging in spontaneous conversations with individuals; they follow up visits to classrooms with feedback to teachers.
- *Continuing to give assistance*
  As implementers move from novices to more experienced users of innovations, their needs continue to change. Leaders provide the necessary support and training. They also make sure to celebrate progress with school staff.

Not only do leaders provide necessary support and guidance as a school or district works to improve, but those in leadership positions usually find that they are involved in changing their own roles in the system (Hord, 1992). Reavis and Griffith (1992) surveyed district leaders to compile this list of characteristics and roles for effective leaders of change:

> knowledge of change management, collaborative leadership style, team building, educational values, high moral purpose/sense of purpose, knowledge of curriculum and instruction, a sound, well-reasoned philosophy, knowledge of climate/culture and how to change/shape them, and sensitivity (in Hord, 1992, p. 72).

Many of these characteristics echo Hord's (1992) reminder that effective leaders are also passionate and kind people who care "deeply about and for individuals in the system, providing the human interface in personalized ways that stem not only from the mind but from the heart as well" (p. 78).

Changing Schools Means Changing Systems

Schools and school districts can be understood as various kinds of interdependent systems (Bolman and Deal, 1991; Petri and Burkhardt, 1992). For example, schools are part of an educational system with a history and vast network of institutions focused on providing public education to all. Each school is also its own set of systems with structural features (schedules, resources, roles, etc.), political features (public expectations, staff hierarchy, etc.), classroom features (instruction, discipline, pedagogy, etc.), and human features (relationships, responsibilities for others, etc.). Tribus (1993) discusses the following interlocking aspects of schooling: the workplace where teachers and students negotiate daily processes of learning; the social system where teachers interact with one another and with administrators to support and constrain innovation in the workplace; the managerial system with its rules, protocols, and politics; and the total educational system which has influenced the way all members of the school community perceive their roles.

However one looks at the systemic structure of schools, the interdependency of the various pieces is clear—changes in one area will create changes in other areas, and lack of change in one area will hamper change in other areas. Any administrator knows that simple changes in curriculum can require a reworking of the school schedule, redefinition of teacher roles, troubleshooting with political groups, and so on. Because school-wide improvement involves simultaneous attention to interlocking systems, Fullan (1991) notes that moderately complex changes can take three to five years and radical restructuring as many as five to ten years.

One issue which complicates system change is that people in different parts of the system tend to view issues differently. As Kahne, Goren, and Amsler (1991) look at it, "It is not necessarily clear that even if actors in these different positions acted exclusively out of their concern for students that they would all support the same goals or that they would recommend the same means of achieving those goals. Actors in different positions within the organization are influenced by their varied perspectives and by their need to respond to different constituents" (p. 28). For example, administrators might be more inclined toward test score improvements while teachers are more concerned with instructional effectiveness. Partial solutions to the problem of differing perspectives include ensuring that all parts of the system are represented on school improvement teams and allowing the people closest to a problem to take responsibility for solving the problem.

Another issue related to schools as systems is the focus on making structural changes in order to enable educational reform. Schools which recognize systemic constraints to educational improvement often begin by reorganizing management structures, developing new avenues of communication and decision making, and bringing various parts of the system together in working partnerships (such as teams of teachers, counselors, and social workers who examine individual student cases). Although such organizational changes are important, Newmann (1991) warns that they must not become the endpoint of school reform. He reminds school staff that new organizational structures—although they may increase the commitment and motivation of adults to teach and students to learn or increase the competence of adults to provide meaningful learning opportunities—do not involve specific improvements in the "content" base of education, in the values, beliefs, skills, and curricula which give the structure its purpose.

The Stages of Change

A number of writers on educational reform have identified stages of change through which most schools progress (Conley, 1993; Follman, Vedros, and Curry, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Snyder, et al., 1995; Tribus, 1993; Wiles, 1993), and many of the change strategies discussed later in this document advocate a similar stage process. The following stages, as compiled from the literature, do not result in a recipe for school improvement

but can guide schools in getting started, determining where they are in the reform process, and/or pushing forward. Stages will likely overlap in occurrence or be repeated as new problems arise.

Stage 1: Initiation

A school that is just starting the process of improvement should start by forming a school improvement team to analyze the current situation at the school and help lead the rest of the school community toward a vision of excellence. This team may take on many of the responsibilities of leaders of change that have been discussed previously in this section. The purpose of the team (advisory, brainstorming, or decision making) must be clarified and its membership should be varied. The team may include the principal, department or grade-level chairs, elected teacher representatives, union representatives, parent representatives, students, a district-level administrator, a school board member, and/or local business representatives. The principal may be the initial change agent who designs this team, but teachers may also initiate this process, which may result in a stronger sense of ownership among faculty. A state- or district-level mandate may also require schools to create a school improvement team.

Building a sense of commitment and communicating a strong vision are central to the initiation stage. Data from interviews with principals in one study on school change (Snyder, et al., 1995) emphasize the need for a vision of success for all students. There is also a need for a vision of staff success in working together toward common goals. Méndez-Morse (1993) recommends that educators speculate on future trends in student and staff needs and parents' and society's expectations as they develop a vision for the school.

Stage 2: Self-Assessment

Since every school is unique and must ensure that plans for change fit with the school's culture, strengths, needs, and desires, a self-assessment of these issues is required. The school improvement team can lead this effort, but everyone in the school community should be involved in collecting data and sharing perceptions. Everson (1995) emphasizes that a self-assessment involves more than the typical "needs assessment" which is concerned with desires and felt needs; it also includes analysis of current practices. Information about the school may be gleaned from surveys of parents, teachers, and students; student achievement data as measured by tests, portfolios, and teacher evaluations; personal stories, yearbooks, newsletters, and other data on the history and culture of the school; measures of student attendance, punctuality, and discipline problems; instruments to measure students' self-esteem and attitudes about school; budgets and staff allocations that identify available resources for change; and descriptions of current programs and reform initiatives currently underway. To include students in the process of school reform, school staff may invite students to conduct interviews or write survey questions. Although a thorough self-assessment is critical to a school's change process, Conley (1993) identifies one pitfall of change as "analysis paralysis" in which schools spend too much time analyzing problems and never move on to solutions.

One option for a school's self-assessment is a widely-used diagnostic and reflective tool called "The Kite" (formerly known as CaMaPe). This instrument, adapted for use in American schools, was developed in The Netherlands and has been widely used there as well as in Germany, Russia, Switzerland, and the Slovak Republic.

The Kite is designed as a practical method that any school can use to better understand itself by identifying its existing organizational structures and educational processes and determining if these structures and processes are supportive of positive change.

Historically, schools have had little time and opportunity for self-reflection. Those that have had the time have struggled to find the most effective and efficient method for doing so. The Kite provides a school with the means to develop an individualized snapshot of its educational practices, e.g., the focus of the curriculum, the instructional practices of the teachers, and the use of tests and test results. It also provides a school with the means to examine the organizational structures that support these practices,

e.g., length of time allotted for each subject, how courses are chosen and offered, the level of autonomy provided to the teacher, the influence of the superintendent on school policy, and the management style of the principal.

The points of the Kite represent four school models, each built from organizational theory and educational research. A school uses these prototypes as a basis for comparison and reflection. During the assessment process, all of the staff in a school or some designated staff teams discuss a series of questions about their school's educational processes and organizational structures. For each question, one response out of the four provided is selected because it most closely describes the situation in their school. Once the school snapshot is "developed," a discrepancy analysis is performed to determine any mismatch or contradiction within the school's educational processes and/or organizational structures.

The goal of this self-assessment process is to provide a clear understanding of where change is possible and most constructive, what obstacles have prevented innovations from becoming institutionalized, or whether the school structures can support a specific school improvement effort, e.g., implementation of cooperative learning or thematic teaching across grade levels. The Kite is a tool schools can use to collect data specific to themselves as a basis for making informed choices and decisions about change efforts.

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Contact:
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Read:
Burkhardt, G., Petri, M., & Roody, D. (1995, Autumn). The kite: an organizational framework for educational development in schools. *Theory into practice*, 34(4), 272-278.

"Although schools must endeavor to stay on track with the tasks and avoid spinning wheels, any plan should allow for important detours."

Petri, M., & Burkhardt, G. (1992). *CaMaPe: An organizational and educational systems approach to secondary school development*. Andover, MA: The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands.
The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands. (1993, November). CaMaPe framework guides school restructuring efforts. *The Regional Lab Reports*. Andover, MA: Author.

To order the above publications:
Contact:
The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands
300 Brickstone Square, Suite 900
Andover, MA 01810
508-470-1060

Stage 3: Goal Setting and Plans for Action

Once a self-assessment has been completed and analyzed, goals can be set and plans for action can be made which will be appropriate for the individual setting and have a better chance of solving identified problems. All school staff, not just the school improvement team, should be involved in setting these goals and agreeing on next steps. Setting long- and short-term goals based on the school's mission and vision for improvement should lead to a problem-solving process that focuses on underlying problems, not symptoms, and results in sensible plans for action.

Everson (1995) provides some helpful suggestions for developing a plan that will truly meet a school's need for improvement:

Best Practices: After a self-assessment has identified current practices, schools should engage in a study of "best practices" by reading educational journals, attending conferences, visiting other schools, and so on.

Discrepancy Analysis: These best practices can then be compared to the self-assessment to determine areas of overlap (which should be celebrated) and areas in which change is needed. Targets for improvement may be categorized as relevant to instruction, curriculum, assessment, climate and attitudes, facilities, leadership, community involvement, or organization.

Clarification of Problem: At this point, school staff need to carefully define targets in the form of problem statements. They should consider who is affected by a problem and what kind of problem it is. For example, is the problem essentially due to a lack of communication, a lack of skills, a lack of materials, a lack of time, or conflicts in ideology?

Selection of Solutions: Armed with clear problem statements and a knowledge of best practices, school staff can then select solutions by (1) developing criteria for a feasible solution (e.g., must it be low cost?), (2) delineating those options that fit the criteria, (3) outlining the benefits and requirements of each option, and (4) analyzing this information to select the best solutions for the particular problem (Everson, 1995, pp. 443-448). This is the most likely point at which school staff may turn to the options profiled in this publication to choose a particular approach to change.

Plans for action should be divided into manageable tasks. Schools are urged to (1) establish tentative beginning and completion dates for tasks, (2) list the individuals who will be responsible for each task, (3) list other individuals whose support is required, (4) identify what resources will be needed, and (5) clarify expected outcomes. Schools cannot do everything at once, so they should limit initial tasks to one or two critical issues and then add other tasks as progress is made with the first ones (Follman, et al., 1992). Although schools must endeavor to stay on track with the tasks and avoid spinning wheels, any plan should allow for important detours. However, Conley (1993) warns against making piecemeal changes that are manifested in "projectitis" rather than basing decisions for action on a comprehensive vision of improved student learning.

If decisions for action are made through an approach that includes careful self-assessment and analysis of options, schools will be able to respond to Fullan's (1991) three Rs for evaluating change plans:

Relevance—Is the change needed and what does it have to offer?

Readiness—Do individuals and the organization have the practical and conceptual capacity to make the change?

Resources—Are the money, time, staff, and other resources that are necessary for the change available or forthcoming?

Stage 4: Implementation/ Professional Development

The first step of implementation is to make sure that everyone is aware of the changes that are to be made and are reassured that they will be supported throughout the process. A variety of communication methods should be used to inform school staff, parents, community agencies, and others about the improvement plans. Advocates should talk with individuals as well as small groups, arrange for staff to visit and talk with people in other schools who are using a similar approach, clarify how a new approach is similar to and different from current practices, and share their own personal enthusiasm (Collins, Wilburn, and Hansen, 1993).

Professional development is a critical aspect of implementation. Faculty may need to learn new skills, participate in collaborative opportunities, and develop methods of thinking that will allow them to be active participants in making the change work in individual classrooms and across the school. Little (1993) points out that skills-training is not going to be enough to help teachers deal with the kinds of reforms that are likely

to be made in schools today. Instead, teachers need opportunities to be intellectuals, to grapple with broad principles, to invent local solutions, to learn how to work with others, and to do their own research.

There will be variations in the amount and kind of staff development needed by individual teachers, but ongoing development opportunities integrated into daily activities (rather than one-shot, inservice workshops) should be the common experience of all faculty. McIntyre and Fessenden (1994) point out that staff development (like any learning experience) will be most effective when provided "at the most teachable moment" when staff are most likely to need the information and will be able to apply it immediately (p. 114). Effective staff development allows teachers to decide on the topics and participate in the design of activities. "Information dispensing" by "experts" must be replaced by active learning experiences that value teachers' own expertise and recognize the problems of integrating new strategies with current practice (National Governors' Association, 1995).

One well-known model for effective staff development comes from Joyce and Showers (1980). They recommend these five components (as summarized by Hord, 1994):

- Presentation of theory or description of a new skill or behavior.
- Demonstration or modeling of the new strategy or skill by presenter.
- Initial practice of the new skill by participants in a protected setting (e.g., workshop).
- Prompt and constructive feedback about participants' practice provided by presenter and colleagues.
- Follow-up coaching and assistance as practitioners implement the new behavior in their classrooms.

Hord (1994) points out that the final component, coaching, is the most critical in enabling staff to successfully transfer ideas learned in a workshop to practices in the classroom.

Though perhaps most common, the teaching of new instructional skills is not the only purpose for professional development during the school improvement process. For instance, before and during implementation of changes, staff may benefit from workshops and structured experiences that help them work together as a supportive and cohesive group. McIntyre and Fessenden (1994) contend that the nature of systemic change in schools requires that participants in the process receive training in a core set of group interaction and collaboration skills early in the change process. Such training should address team building, meeting skills, problem-solving, conflict-resolution, and communication. Professional development to enhance teachers' subject-matter knowledge may also be required as part of a school improvement plan.

A recent publication on professional development for teachers, from the National Governors' Association (1995), asserts that effective professional development does the following:

- Stimulates and supports site-based initiatives
- Supports and addresses teacher initiatives for improvement as well as school or district initiatives
- Reflects the current knowledge base on teaching and learning
- Offers opportunities for teachers to broaden and deepen their subject-matter knowledge
- Offers teachers opportunities to be active learners—to explore, question, and debate
- Respects teachers as professionals and adult learners
- Provides sufficient time and follow-up support for teachers to master new strategies and content and integrate these into practice
- Ensures accessibility and inclusiveness for all teachers (pp. 21-22)

Effective professional development activities that specifically address planned changes will get implementation started. Many of the other activities involved in implementation—such as finding resources and engaging in evolutionary planning—are described in the above discussion on leadership of change. One other issue that must be mentioned, however, is the varied stages of implementation that individuals tend to experience. The following "Levels of Use," from Hord et al. (1987), have resulted from extensive

"Perhaps the most important aspects of institutionalization are maintaining a sense of continual improvement and conserving the shared governance process to solve problems."

research on the implementation of innovative practices in schools:

Level 0–Non-use
The individual has little or no knowledge of the innovation and is doing nothing to pursue involvement with it.

Level I–Orientation
The individual is acquiring information about the innovation and considering its requirements for implementation.

Level II–Preparation
The individual prepares for a first use of the innovation.

Level III–Mechanical Use
The user is focused on day-to-day use of the innovation as he or she tries to master the tasks involved; use is generally disjointed and superficial and little time is made for reflection on how well students' or others' needs are being met.

Level IVA–Routine
Use of the innovation is stabilized, but no attempt is made to improve on the innovation.

Level IVB–Refinement
The user, now comfortable with the innovation, varies its use in order to improve on its impact for students or others.

Level V–Integration
Varied uses of the innovation are discussed among colleagues and combined with related activities in order to collectively benefit students or others.

Level VI–Renewal
The user explores new goals for self and the organization as he or she reevaluates the innovation and seeks out new developments in the field to further benefit students and others.

Stage 5: Reviewing Progress

Throughout implementation, school staff should use a variety of assessment tools (similar to those used in the self-assessment) to monitor progress toward goals and make modifications as necessary. Formative evaluation takes place during development and implementation, and the results are shared internally to help redirect efforts. Summative evaluation takes place after a particular task or change seems to be complete so that school staff and members of the community can learn what improvements have been made (Follman, et al., 1992). Snyder, et al. (1995) have found that principals are looking for new ways to gather information that answers the question, "How are we doing?", and Conley (1993) cautions educators not to measure new learning with old tools. Authentic forms of student assessment, including portfolios, student interviews, video productions, and performances, should become a part of any school's restructuring efforts. In addition, regular, open meetings that allow school staff and/or community members to air their concerns and share their successes should be part of the ongoing evaluation of a school's improvement process.

Stage 6: Institutionalization

Over time and with continual monitoring, successful changes will become ingrained in the daily life of the school. Staff, students, and the community should celebrate accomplishments. However, society and the needs of students continue to change. Schools cannot expect to make some improvements and then sit back and think the work is complete. Maintaining a sense of continual improvement and conserving the shared governance process to solve problems are the most important aspects of institutionalization. The school improvement team should be a standing leadership group for the school, and

various staff should be rotated into the team to keep it fresh and relevant. To ensure such institutionalization, new teachers in the school will need to be prepared for the school's programs and innovative ways of addressing problems. Also, adequate funding for innovations and time for shared decision making must be maintained.

Seeking Outside Assistance

Successful school improvement should be managed at the school level and overseen by the members of the school community, but schools need not go through the process alone. Each of the strategies described in the next sections of this document is accompanied by an organization that helps schools learn to use the approach and provides staff with various kinds of assistance. Such external change agents can bring a fresh eye to problems in a school, offer alternative suggestions for how to evaluate effectiveness, provide subtle pressure to keep things moving, and offer a synthesis of research findings to help schools decide on solutions to problems. These agents should not be seen as experts who know "better" but as fellow educators who know "different" (Tushnet, 1992). Whatever reform approach a school may employ to help with improvement efforts, staff must be careful not to see implementation of the strategy as an end in itself, since the ultimate purpose of school change is obviously to improve students' learning experiences and enable them to succeed in school.

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Section II

Resources for Comprehensive School Change

This major section of the document includes a large variety of resources, programs, strategies, and ideas to spur, support, and manage comprehensive school change. They are divided into four categories:

Comprehensive Change Managed Internally
Profiles of selected school- and district-based approaches for restructuring that are initiated and managed by the local site with assistance from an outside agency.

Comprehensive Change Through Management Innovations
A look at some of the newest ideas for school-wide reform proposed by private companies or charter school policies, which require new/outside management of schools and change at the local level.

Catalyst Ideas for Change
Descriptions of theories or broad concepts about education and management which can serve as the basis for practical decisions about change.

Curriculum-Based Approaches to Change
Brief discussions of a number of curriculum programs or instructional improvements which focus on immediate change in the classroom but may also lead to more widespread reform.

Comprehensive Change Managed Internally

The following section profiles various approaches to comprehensive school change that are initiated and managed by existing school staff with the assistance of an outside agency. Although the approaches included here do not represent an exhaustive list of all that is available, these are some of the most widely known and far-reaching programs and strategies. Some provide many specific recommendations on how instruction, curriculum, and assessment should be changed, others offer a detailed process for school change, and some give equal attention to both of these issues: all are founded on certain philosophies and goals regarding school improvement. Although most of the approaches focus on improvement at the school-building level, the last two are concerned with wider, systemic change and are meant to assist districts or states with educational change initiatives. Some approaches are only appropriate for elementary and/or middle schools, some are primarily for high schools, and others can be implemented in any school. Each of the approaches is coordinated by or originates from a particular organization that promotes the approach, offers assistance of various kinds, and evaluates and reports on the effectiveness of the approach.

Every profile follows a similar format that covers the following topics:

- An introduction which includes a brief description, a quick history, and an overview of the philosophy and goals of the approach.
- The targets of improvement, that include what levels of schooling are appropriate and what particular educational problems are given attention.
- Information about what happens at the school level, that includes school-wide programs and/or the process for school change that is recommended.
- Specific changes to instruction such as curricular, pedagogical, and assessment reform and classroom-based programs.
- Outcomes (for students, staff, and schools) that have been shown to result from implementation of the approach. Any school reform strategy is going to encounter problems, and some of the challenges that are specific to an approach are mentioned in the profile.
- Estimated costs and other necessary resources.
- Kinds of assistance provided by the organization that coordinates the approach.
- Contact information and suggestions for further reading.

Each profile is followed by a case study of a school or school district (usually in the Southeast) that is successfully using the approach. For the most part, these sites were recommended by staff at the coordinating organization.

We invite your examination on pages 22 and 23 of a matix of factors to undergo change as related to the implementation of respective programs.

The School Development Program

Introduction

The School Development Program (SDP) emphasizes creating an environment in which the child's many developmental needs—social, psychological, cognitive, physical, ethical, and linguistic—can be met. It is based on the belief that all students will be able to learn if they have built satisfying relationships with significant adult caretakers who provide consistent messages about values and goals. James P. Comer, MD, founder of the program, contends that behavior and learning problems that students exhibit are often due to conflicts between experiences that children bring to school and the expectations of schools. In order to bridge the gap between home and school environments, SDP expects parents, school staff, and community members to work together to nurture children's growth and development. Academic achievement is one priority of this program, but SDP also seeks to improve school climate, children's emotional health, and students' social behaviors, with the understanding that these factors are intertwined with academic experiences. As Comer explains, "We are preparing young people so they can hold jobs, live in families, serve as heads of households, find satisfaction and meaning in life, and be responsible citizens. You don't get all of that by simply focusing on academic content" (Brandt, 1986, p. 15).

The School Development Program grew out of a 1968 collaboration between the Yale University Child Study Center and two New Haven, Connecticut public schools where achievement was the lowest in the city, attendance was poor, staff morale was low, and parents did not trust the schools. Changes in school/community relations, school staff's knowledge of child development, and school organization were needed. Over 600 schools in twenty-one states and the District of Columbia now utilize the SDP model.

This program is not designed by other people to be added to a school's activities, but is a process for comprehensive change initiated, created, and implemented by school staff and parents. Each school implements the program differently depending on its needs, and plans for improvement are made by consensus. Says Comer, "When you address the social climate and improve the quality of relationships among parents, teachers, administrators, and students,

that reduces distrust and frees the energy that had gone into fighting each other, so that people have more time to concentrate on the academic program, to plan, and simply to manage the school better" (Brandt, 1986, p. 14).

Who/what is the target of improvement?

The School Development Program originated in urban elementary schools with mostly African-American, low-income students. It continues to be especially appropriate for the needs of young children. However, in recent years, a number of middle-grade schools and some high schools have implemented this approach, as have schools in rural areas and in other diverse communities.

What happens at the school level?

Although the School Development Program offers a number of detailed recommendations for school reform, it also emphasizes that each school must make changes in its own way, according to mutually agreed-upon goals. Comer reminds schools that this is a long-term process that may take three to five years before any significant changes are evident. Basic to this program's process of change are democratic decision making and site-based management. But, even though the local school is the center of reform, full district-level adoption of the SDP (that will assure continuity of support even when the administration changes) is strongly encouraged.

Any SDP school is expected to put into place three mechanisms through which change is fostered:

The School Planning and Management Team

This team—usually led by the principal but including elected parents, teachers, and support staff (and students, if in a middle or a secondary school)—is expected to develop a comprehensive school plan that establishes goals for students' academic achievement and for the school's social climate and public relations. A plan for staff development is organized around these goals, and periodic assessment of progress toward the goals allows mid-stream adjustments and indicates successes and opportunities. Three principles guide the discussion of problems and solutions: collaboration among people with varying strengths, the need for consensus decision making, and an attitude of "no fault" problem-solving. As the core policy-making body for the school, the School Planning and Management Team is expected to gather resources for reform, evaluate and modify the curriculum, and oversee implementation of policies and practices (Comer, Haynes, Hamilton-Lee, Boger, and Rollock, 1986; Comer, 1994). This team "gives a school a sense of direction, prioritizes and coordinates activities, provides communication, and most importantly, allows everybody to experience a sense of ownership and stake in the outcome of the program in a building" (Comer, 1994, p. 5).

The Student and Staff Support Team

(formerly known as The Mental Health Team)
Typically including teachers, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and parents, this team meets weekly to analyze and address problems of individual students. Team members also work with individual teachers on specific student problems. In addition to intervention activities, this team also attempts to prevent problems by helping change school practices that are not consistent with current knowledge about child development (Brandt, 1986; Comer, et al., 1986; Zimmerman, 1993).

The Parents' Team

This program encourages parent participation in the school through parent representatives on the School Planning and Management Team, a parents' group that works with school staff to plan social and academic activities, and parental attendance at school events. Parents also work as assistants in classrooms, the library, and the cafeteria, and some may be paid stipends for their daily assistance (Comer, 1994; Comer, et al., 1986).

How is instruction changed?

The School Development Program provides few explicit recommendations for changes in the basic school curriculum or instructional methods. In elementary schools, primary attention and time is usually given to mathematics and

Factors to Undergo Change in Selected Programs

Factors to Undergo Change	*School Development Program*	*Success for All/Roots & Wings*	*Coalition of Essential Schools*	*Accelerated Schools Project*	*Onward to Excellence*	*Program for School Improvement*
Assessment		●	●	●		
Climate	●		●	●		
Community/ Parent Involvement	●	●				
Curriculum		●	●	●		
Facilities						
Instruction		●	●	●		
Leadership	●		●	●	●	●
Motivation	●	●		●		
Organization/ Management (Classroom)		●	●			
Organization/ Management (School)	●		●	●	●	●
Other	*Social Skills of Students*			*Changes decided by school-shared decisions*	*Changes decided by school-shared decisions*	*Changes decided by school-shared decisions*

*Chart structure adapted from: Everson, S.T. (1995) Selecting School improvement programs. In J.H. Block, S.T. Everson, & T.R. Guskey (Eds.), School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Leaders (pp. 433-452). New York: Scholastic.

language arts learning, but, although curricula in most SDP schools tend to be fairly traditional, individual schools can become quite innovative as they seek to reach their goals (Ascher, 1993). Methods for more effective learning, such as smaller classes, cooperative learning, and peer tutoring are encouraged (King, 1994), and some elementary schools have reorganized to allow students to stay with the same teacher for two years (Brandt, 1986). For students with learning disabilities, Comer suggests bringing in a consultant to meet teachers' requests for assistance (Comer, et al., 1986). Staff development should be organized by the teachers to address areas in which they feel they need additional information or skills.

One curricular change implemented at some SDP schools is "social skills units" that are preferably developed by teachers in the school and integrated into the regular curriculum. According to Comer, et al. (1986), "Social skills

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Factors to Undergo Change in Selected Programs

Center for Leadership in School Reform	*Education Alternatives, Inc.*	*The Edison Project*	*Effective Schools*	*Outcome Based Education*	*Total Quality Management*	*Turning Points*
		●	●	●	●	
			●		●	
●	●	●	●		●	●
				●		●
	●	●	●			
	●	●	●	●		●
●			●		●	●
				●	●	●
	●	●	●	●	●	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	●
District-level systemic change		*Technology, Financing*	*Technology, Financing, Arts Education, Teacher Rewards*		*Encourages Continuous Improvement*	*Middle-School Reform*

include relating to others in a mutually acceptable caring way, developing social amenities, and learning the skills necessary to deal successfully with social institutions such as banks, the political process, employment, and so forth" (p. 17). Examples of social skills lessons include how to deal with one's feelings and how to resolve conflicts with peers.

In addition to this curricular change, SDP schools have collaborated with other school improvement programs in the following initiatives:

ATLAS (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment) Communities
Funded by the New American Schools Development Corporation, the ATLAS Communities is a cooperative effort of three school districts and four educational organizations. A fundamental element of the project is the creation of the K-12 "school pathway," a personalized learning

environment for each student.

The Comer/Zigler Initiative
The initiative offers year-round child care and family support services in schools that are governed by representatives of all the adult stakeholders.

The Developmental Studies Center Partnership
The School Developmental Program and the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, California are collaborating to combine both programs. They share the philosophy that children thrive and learn within a social context and that the more caring the context, the more students will develop values such as responsibility, caring, and respect for self and others. The partnership aims to strengthen reading and language arts instruction in Comer Schools and to build the capacity of SDP personnel to support adoption of DSC's literature-based reading arts programs.

What improvements can be expected?

Comer and Associates have reported on various program impacts. For instance, in Prince George's County Public Schools between 1985 and 1987, average percentile gains in reading, language, and mathematics on the California Achievement Test were significantly greater for SDP schools than for the district as a whole; fifth graders in SDP schools gained 21 percentile points in mathematics, while the district as a whole gained only 11 percentile points. As another example, SDP schools in Benton Harbor, Michigan, experienced declines in suspensions and absences that were significantly larger than for the district as a whole (Comer and Haynes, 1991).

When compared with a control group of non-SDP students, teachers rate SDP students higher on classroom behavior, attitudes toward authority, and group participation; and SDP students report a significantly improved sense of self-competence. Students, parents, and teachers in SDP schools all rate the school and classroom climates more positively than those in non-SDP schools (Comer and Haynes, 1991).

Increased parent participation builds parents' confidence in the school and in their role as contributors to the school community. Many parents who have become involved in the SDP have gone on to acquire "living wage jobs" and/or have been motivated to return to school themselves, and to complete high school and college educations (Ascher, 1993; Comer, 1994).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

The additional responsibilities, time, and energy expected of teachers and parents who are part of either the Planning and Management Team or the Student and Staff Support Team may prohibit many parents and teachers from volunteering for these responsibilities.

What resources are required?

Educators are trained in groups for one week before initiating the program at a cost of $1000 per person, and they also receive another week of training about eight months later.

Time is needed for team meetings and the difficult process of consensus decision making, but Comer believes this use of time is worthwhile as the result is more effective and efficient school practices (Ascher, 1993).

Although many of the components of the SDP are staffed by existing personnel, a program facilitator (that may be shared among a number of schools) is necessary. Additional time from a mental health specialist may also be required.

What assistance is available?

The School Development Program offers training to school personnel from various school districts. They can then go back to their home schools and introduce and implement the program. Orientation workshops for representative groups of parents, teachers, and administrators are conducted at three regional Comer Professional Development Centers in Prince George's County, Maryland; at San Francisco State University; and at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio. Partnerships are currently being developed with schools of education and state departments of education that can provide local training and

Case Study

Washington Magnet School of Science and Technology

Greensboro, North Carolina

When Doris Davis took her position as principal of the Washington Magnet School two years ago, she was looking for a model for improvement that would specifically address Washington's problems with low parent involvement, poor student attendance, and low student test scores. Challenged by the needs of a kindergarten through fifth grade student population of which 75 percent receive free or reduced lunch and 85 percent are ethnic minorities, Davis also wanted whatever approach the school took to be student-centered and proven to be successful. She had discussed Comer's School Development Program with other principals in the district who were using it, and she had visited a school in Prince George's County, Maryland, that had had success with it. So she sought out training for her school staff from state and district facilitators and began to implement the various components.

Now the school has a management team that includes teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, parents, and other school staff, such as a custodian and the cafeteria manager. Washington also has created a student services team—called the Hope Team—to address individual student problems; members include teachers, a nurse, a social worker, a psychologist, and a school counselor. In addition, a parent team works to create connections between home and school and actively promotes unity among students, parents, and staff. After only two years with the program, Davis feels that everyone—staff, students, parents, and others in the neighborhood—is buying into the Comer philosophy that the whole community must be involved in the education of children and that success for all students is possible. They also seem to recognize, however, that this program is a long-term process. "It doesn't happen overnight," emphasizes Davis, "but it is also not a fly-by-night program that is 'soon going to go away.'"

One important aspect of Washington's efforts through the School Development Program is building relations with parents, especially those in a nearby housing community. The largest percentage of Washington's students live in this housing project, so meetings with parents have been held there, all the teachers in the school have visited there, and parents have organized a volunteer program to

escort children from the housing area to the school (a distance which is too short for busing but unsafe for students to walk alone). Parents who live in the neighborhood are now more involved in school activities, including homework assignments that require parents and students to work together, parent-teacher softball games, and family picnics, and they feel more a part of the school community. Many more parents are also serving as volunteers in the school in various capacities, including reading stories to children, helping with field trips, and serving on committees.

Others in the community have also become more involved with Washington's educational efforts. The neighborhood public library has opened its doors for school meetings and parent-teacher conferences so that children can take advantage of library resources while adults talk. A number of colleges in the area, including the predominantly black, all-female Bennett College and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, are collaborating with the school by providing tutors for students and working with staff on projects associated with this school's focus on science and technology.

Writing has been one of Washington's instructional emphasis lately, and this has been evident in recent increases in test scores; two years ago, only 19.5 percent passed a standardized writing test, and one year later 50.5 percent passed.

Consistent with the Comer model, Washington also focuses on improving the social skills of children; teachers are providing more opportunities for students to be leaders in the classroom. More students are experiencing public speaking and performing through an in-school television show and assemblies, and citizenship is emphasized through participation in school-as-community activities. Davis finds that students appear to have better images of themselves and their abilities. Student attendance at school has increased each of the past two years, and discipline referrals have been greatly reduced. Finally, teachers expectations of students have been raised and staff attitudes about the school and community have improved.

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assistance independent of Yale. In the Southeast, such partnerships have been established with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Mississippi Department of Education.

Due to the increasing interest in the SDP, staff at the School Development Program have designed a 14-part videotape series that demonstrates the program in use at a number of schools and describes and offers advice about all aspects of the Comer process. The series comes with a manual that is meant to encourage discussion about the program and assist with implementation. This series is called "For Children's Sake:

The Comer School Development Program." To order, call 800-811-7775.

The School Development Program also publishes a quarterly newsletter called the *School Development Program Newsline* to keep readers up-to-date with Center activities, highlight successes in SDP schools, and share the latest research and evaluation studies relevant to SDP.

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School Development Program home page on the Internet via the World Wide Web at:
http://info.med.yale.edu/comer

View:

A brief introductory videotape is available for $10 from the School Development Program by calling 800-811-7775.

Read:

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Success for All and Roots and Wings

Introduction

Coordinated by the Center for Research on the Education of Children Placed At Risk, at Johns Hopkins University, Success for All offers a variety of research-based curriculum, instruction, and support service recommendations for improving the achievement of elementary school students. It focuses on the cognitive and basic skill development of children, and, although it results in comprehensive rethinking of how schools operate, the process of school-wide reform is not its main concern. In striving for success for all students, "Success is defined as performance in reading, writing, and language arts at or near grade level by the third grade, maintenance of this status through the end of the elementary grades, and avoidance of retention or special education" (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, and Wasik, 1990, p. 1). Educators who use Success for All hold certain fundamental beliefs about students, including that every child can learn, success in the early grades is critical for future success in school, and student problems both inside and outside school must be addressed in order for students to achieve academically.

Success for All grew out of a collaboration between Johns Hopkins University and one inner-city Baltimore school during the 1987-88 school year. When staff at Johns Hopkins were asked to implement strategies to help this primarily poor student population achieve, the chief criterion for any strategy was that its effectiveness had been supported by research (Ascher, 1993). After rigorous evaluation proved the Success for All program to be effective for student learning in five Baltimore schools, it began to be noticed by schools throughout the country. The 1994-95 school year saw Success for All being implemented in over 200 schools in twenty states.

Roots and Wings is a more recent development by the Johns Hopkins team. It complements and extends the goals and activities of Success for All. With funding from the New American Schools Development Corporation, Roots and Wings is currently being piloted in a few schools. Building on the basic foundation secured by Success for All instruction, students in Roots and Wings schools practice problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills through a mathematics program called MathWings and an integrated science/social studies program called World Lab. Roots and Wings also emphasizes "neverstreaming"—the idea that all students should be helped to succeed in mainstream classes. The basic goals of Roots and Wings follow:

- To guarantee that every child, regardless of family background or disability, will successfully complete elementary school, achieving the highest standards in basic skills such as reading and writing, as well as in mathematics, science, history, and geography (the *roots*).

- To engage students in activities that enable them to apply everything they learn so they can see the usefulness and inter-connectedness of knowledge (the *wings*).

(Slavin, Madden, Dolan, and Wasik, 1994a, p. 10)

To become a Roots and Wings school, a school begins by implementing Success for All during one school year and adding Roots and Wings during the next two years (Center for Social Organization of Schools [CSOS], 1993).

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Although there has been some talk about expanding Success for All/Roots and Wings to middle schools, these programs are currently designed specifically for elementary schools. Success for All is primarily used in schools with large populations of disadvantaged students, but some schools that are in relatively less need have also adopted the program. Student learning and academic achievement are the direct targets of all program components.

What happens at the school level?

Before Success for All/Roots and Wings can be implemented, at least eighty percent of the faculty must vote in favor of it (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, and Wasik, 1992). Not only should schools be interested in improving students' academic achievement, but they are also expected to be committed to greatly reducing the numbers of special education referrals and the use of student retention.

The primary change made by these programs at the school level is in instructional practices (which are discussed in detail below). Teachers in a new Success for All school are provided three days of training in August in these approaches to instruction. This training is offered by staff from Johns Hopkins or by experienced staff at another Success for All school (Slavin, et al., 1992). Initial training is kept relatively brief with extensive follow-up and coaching used throughout the year (Slavin, et al., 1990). Approximately six staff development days may be required during the first year of implementation (CSOS, 1993). Teachers support one another throughout training and implementation by working in grade-level teams and coaching partnerships.

A school-based facilitator is needed to plan the implementation of Success for All, work with the principal on scheduling, oversee the eight-week assessment program (described below), and be available to individual teachers and tutors.

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Although such a facilitator should preferably be full time, a few schools have successfully implemented the program with only a half-time facilitator. Usually, these facilitators are experienced teachers who have taught reading, early childhood, or Chapter 1. According to the program creators, "The overarching responsibility of every facilitator is to ensure that the program achieves its goals—that it delivers *success*, not just services. This means that the facilitator is constantly checking on the operation of the program and its outcomes" (Slavin, et al., 1992, p. 45). One important task is ensuring that teachers, tutors, family support staff, and others are communicating with and supporting each other. Facilitators may also organize staff development workshops or informal faculty discussions during the school year to address problems or needs as they arise (Slavin, et al., 1990, 1992).

Every Success for All school must have a Family Support Team that works to address barriers to student learning that originate outside the classroom. This team typically consists of the principal, a parent liaison, a school counselor, and other appropriate staff, such as a social worker, if available. Responsibilities of the Family Support Team include implementing strategies to involve parents in the school, organizing parenting workshops, and designing an effective approach to improving school attendance. Team members, along with a student's teachers and parents, also review individual cases of students who are not benefiting from improved instruction because of family, behavior, or attendance problems; the team makes recommendations for additional attention and services for the student and follows up on each case at a later time (Slavin, et al., 1992). Teachers are encouraged to make referrals to this team.

Success for All schools seek out parent involvement in the school by including parents in school governance and encouraging them to serve as volunteers in such roles as listeners to student reading or helpers in an after-school homework room. Many schools have had a "Success for All Kick-Off Demonstration Night" to inform parents about the program and about what they can do to support their children's learning (Slavin, et al., 1992).

Schools are expected to conduct high-quality, rigorous evaluations of the effects of Success for All, preferably by using a variety of measures to compare their students to those in matched control schools. This gives the school accurate feedback on successes and problems. Periodic assessments of the implementation are required in order to inform staff at Johns Hopkins of needed training and other support (CSOS, 1993).

A school that decides to implement Roots and Wings will have in place all the above components for Success for All, and it will also maintain an after-school program for tutoring, social services, and art or computer activities (Slavin, et al., 1994a).

District support for implementing Success for All/Roots and Wings is necessary, and Johns Hopkins staff prefer to work with districts who hope to expand the program from a few pilot sites to throughout the district. Adaptations to the Success for All program, including adoption of some but not all components, are supported by Johns Hopkins staff if such changes are required to meet special circumstances of the school and if they are "consistent with the overall program goals of early intervention, rapid pace, and high expectations for all" (Slavin, et al., 1992, p. 50).

How is instruction changed?

All Success for All schools receive the same curriculum materials and supplies, although schools with a Spanish bilingual program can opt for the Success for All, Spanish reading curriculum.

A half-day pre-kindergarten or a full-day kindergarten class is a recommended aspect of the Success for All program. Using story-telling, Peabody Language Development Kits, and other approaches, these early schooling experiences focus on language development. Reading instruction in first grade (and, sometimes, the second half of the kindergarten year) emphasizes developing students' language skills, understanding of meaning and context in stories, and phonetic awareness through reading and rereading interesting and appropriate stories. Students are encouraged to read to each other and to read

"A key component of the Success for All instructional approach is to group children by age/grade during most of the day but to regroup them by ability for the daily 90-minute reading period."

at home to someone every night. Second- through fifth-grade students read materials selected by the school or district as they engage in structured activities of reading, discussion, and writing. Cooperative learning and a writer's workshop format are regularly used.

A key component of the Success for All instructional approach is to group children by age/grade during most of the day but to regroup them by ability for the daily 90-minute reading period. Such reading groups allow the teacher to teach the whole class, so that seat work is reduced. Every eight weeks, reading teachers assess each student's progress in order to identify those who need tutoring, those who should change reading groups, and those who may need other kinds of assistance, such as family interventions or screenings for vision problems (Slavin, et al., 1990).

Another important aspect of Success for All is the reading tutors. Tutors are expected to be certified teachers who have taught Chapter 1, primary reading, or special education in the past. During most of the day, tutors work one-on-one with students who are struggling with reading, but during the daily reading period, tutors serve as additional reading teachers, so that all class sizes are reduced to between 15 and 20 students. Those students who need extra attention are tutored for twenty minutes per day during a one-hour social studies time in their regular classrooms. Priority for tutoring goes to first graders, since Success for All wants to help students learn to read before they have the opportunity to fail and become remedial readers. Tutors work in conjunction with regular teachers to coordinate the day's tutoring with the day's reading lesson, and they conduct initial reading inventories with individual students to decide on their reading-group placement (Slavin, et al., 1990).

In the Roots and Wings program, students work together in groups based on ability and interest. WorldLab is an integrated social studies, science, and language arts curriculum that replaces existing science and social studies programs. It offers students the chance to work in teams on real-world problems through intensive and long-term simulations. MathWings draws on the mathematics standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and emphasizes problem solving and concept development (Madden and Slavin, 1994; Olson, 1993).

What improvements are expected?

When compared to matched control schools, students in Success for All schools have always outscored control students on reading scales and other assessments. The striking results of these many studies are summed up in the Success for All brochure: "In average grade equivalents, Success for All students perform approximately three months ahead of comparison students by first grade, seven months ahead by third grade, and more than a year ahead by fifth grade. Effects are particularly strong for students who are most at risk, those in the lower 25% of their grades" (p. 2). Some examples from the Southeast are encouraging: In Pepperhill, South Carolina, first-grade students in a Success for All school were found to be reading four months ahead of students in the control school. Students in two Success for All schools in Montgomery, Alabama, were reading five months ahead of their control group peers; also, in the control schools, first-grade students in the lowest-achieving 25 percent were not reading at all, while those in the Success for All schools were reading at a 1.5 grade-equivalent level (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, and Smith 1994b).

In the original Baltimore Success for All school, student absences dropped 6 percent, and referrals to special education were virtually eliminated (Madden, et al., 1992). Retention in the first Success for All school was strongly discour-

aged, and, over time, the effect of this policy resulted in only 4 percent of students who should have been fourth graders being retained, while among the five control schools, 31 percent of students had failed at least one year. The lowest-achieving students continued to succeed even when promoted with their age mates (Madden, et al., 1992).

Studies have shown that the achievement of disadvantaged students can be significantly improved under current funding, but that when additional funds are available, students do even better, and success for all is more likely. Research has also shown that the longer students are in the program, the better they do, and that prevention—ensuring that students succeed from the start—is far more effective for student achievement than trying to improve the achievement of students who have already fallen behind (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, and Wasik, 1992; Slavin, et al., 1990).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

Success for All schools have experienced problems similar to any school trying to reform its operations and practices. Schools have difficulty securing the necessary time for staff development, they require long-term district commitment for the program, and they flounder when leadership at the school site changes hands (especially when the new administrators have no knowledge of the program) (L. Dolan, personal communication, March 16, 1995).

What resources are required?

Because Success for All consists of specific curricular and instructional changes and requires full-time tutors that may not already be in the school, initial costs for this program can be significant. Howevér, the program has been designed and refined to be covered by a school's existing Chapter 1 funds, if the school has a predominantly high-poverty student population. Johns Hopkins staff have worked out an average estimate of first-year costs to a school, based on an estimate of 500 students, teacher/tutor salary and benefits of $50,000 per person, and an average Chapter 1 per pupil funding of $1000. If 75 percent of its students are eligible for Chapter

"... the program has been designed and refined to be covered by a school's existing Chapter 1 funds, if the school has a largely high-poverty student population."

1 funding (and, thus, a large number of tutors may be necessary), the total cost of the program would be $370,000, and the school would receive $375,000 in Chapter 1 funds. For 50 percent eligibility, the cost would be $220,000, and the school would receive $250,000 in Chapter 1 funds. For 25 percent eligibility, the numbers are $170,000 and $125,000 respectively. Thus, many schools can afford to become Success for All schools without additional funds. The above estimates include the typical start-up costs of about $20,000 for materials and $14,000 for training and support during the first year. However, these totals do not include the costs of a new pre-kindergarten or kindergarten program or new staff for family support services (CSOS, 1993). Additional costs for Roots and Wings materials and curriculum training are still under development.

Seeking success for all students is a big investment, but Johns Hopkins staff point out that the reliable evidence suggests that Success for All schools will soon experience reductions in the funding needed for special education, remediation programs, and retention (Slavin, et al., 1990).

What assistance is available?

The Johns Hopkins Center for Research on the Education of Children Placed At Risk conducts training and supplies materials relevant to the program. Although Johns Hopkins staff are closely involved with initial training of teachers and facilitators, further assistance is "directed toward empowering the school's staff to solve its own problems as much as possible" (Slavin, et al., 1992, p. 49). Two people from Johns Hopkins

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Case Study

Fews Elementary School

Montgomery, Alabama

Fews Elementary has been using the Success for All program for the past five years, and its program facilitator, Judy George, says that all of the faculty are pleased to have the program at their school. Fews has been identified as an "at-risk" school by the district; it is located in a poor neighborhood, and 98 percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Before Success for All was implemented, student test scores were well below average, Chapter 1 money funded a pull-out program, and no one was satisfied with the learning and achievement of the all-black student population. Montgomery County's curriculum director invited staff from Johns Hopkins to present the Success for All approach to a number of schools in the district, and most of the faculty at Fews were eager to try it. The reallocation of Chapter 1 funds, plus an extra investment by the district, provided the necessary training and materials and allowed teacher-tutors and a program facilitator to be hired.

George points out that, at Fews Elementary, Success for All is "not a remedial program, but a prevention program." Reading tutors are primarily dedicated to the needs of first graders, but the whole school benefits from the program. All students are grouped by ability for reading each day, and tutors are used to keep the reading classes small. Two of Fews' eight tutors work with fourth through sixth graders in reading groups throughout the school day; the other tutors work one-on-one with younger students after reading groups are finished for the day. All students are reassessed every eight weeks to adjust their placement in the reading ability groups. George stresses that such grouping during reading time allows students to experience success and be leaders more often than in the large, heterogeneous class.

Cooperative learning is emphasized during reading instruction in all grades, and the younger students are exposed to a consistent, phonetically-based approach that seems to work well with Fews' particular student population. A predictable structure which students know will provide them with the "sounds to unlock the world of print" is just what these students need, believes George. The last fifteen minutes of reading time each day is devoted to "book club," during which stu-

dents find reading material—basal readers, stories, novels—to take home. Students are expected to read twenty minutes at home each evening, and parents confirm this by filling out a read-and-respond form for their children to take to school the next day. Each reading team earns points (for certificates and other fun rewards) based on the number of students who return the forms, so some peer pressure to do the reading is used.

Fews also has a Family Support Team which meets regularly to discuss how to help students with particular problems, and the school holds regular parent workshops on everything from parenting skills to school activities. A full-time parent liaison calls the parents of absent children every morning and visits children's homes every afternoon to offer assistance to parents, such as helping get needed children's clothing or offering advice on effective discipline. Free dinners, book fairs, and other activities seek to involve the parents more in the school, but a recent site-based review of school strengths and weaknesses has emphasized that much still needs to be done to improve relations with parents.

Success for All has made significant changes at Fews. Reading comprehension test scores have improved, office referrals for disruptive students have been greatly reduced, and students' social skills and ability to work together have been enhanced. Teachers report a "tremendous difference" in the ability of students at all grade levels to read and to remember what they have read, and the upper-grade teachers find that students coming out of three or more years with the Success for All approach are much better writers than their predecessors. George also observes that teachers are engaging in much more cooperation than before this program was introduced, and, as students move from group to group during reading time, teachers now refer to the students at Fews as "our students" instead of focusing on one class of "my students."

Success for All has also enhanced Fews efforts at school-wide reform. The introduction of new staff as tutors and aides who were all eager to try something new provided a contagious spirit of experimentation and effort for the rest of the school. Also, the experience of working as a cooperative school team in the Success for All program prepared everyone for the demands of site-base management that came a couple of years later.

Fews Elementary definitely plans to continue using Success for All in the coming years, although this school's excellent results have led the district to change the way Chapter 1 money is used in other schools, and this will require Fews to make do with less. Judy George is sure that the program will continue to be a success because everyone is committed to making it work.

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will visit schools during their first year to provide additional training and help with implementation, and Johns Hopkins staff keep in regular telephone contact with the school-based facilitators (Slavin, et al., 1992).

The Center publishes frequent studies of the effects of its programs and has a variety of current publications available. They also put out a newsletter for Success for All schools called *Success Story*.

For further information:

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View:

Success for All Overview Video (Available from Johns Hopkins University at $25.00 + 10% shipping per copy.)

Read:

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The Coalition of Essential Schools

Introduction

CES was established in 1984 at Brown University as a partnership between the university and twelve "charter schools." The concepts that led to the Coalition grew out of a 1979 to 1984 study of American high schools sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Independent Schools. This research (and, later, experience with Coalition schools) led Theodore Sizer to write two influential books—*Horace's Compromise* (1985) and *Horace's School* (1992)—on which much of the work of CES is based.

The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), headquartered at Brown University, is a network of schools that are working for comprehensive change focused on helping students learn to use their minds well. According to its founder, Theodore Sizer, "The Essential Schools movement is first and foremost a movement in *pedagogy*, in the relationship between teacher, student, and the subjects of study that bring them together" (Sizer, 1989, p. 5). CES does not offer educators a blueprint for how or in what ways to change their schools, but it is founded on nine Common Principles believed to be necessary for schools to change in meaningful and lasting ways. The idea of "essential" schools is based on the expectation that schools should help students master the skills and knowledge essential for adulthood in a democratic society rather than merely cover content.

As of October 1995, there were 216 Member Schools in the Coalition; these are schools that can demonstrate the implementation of new practices based on the nine Common Principles of Essential Schools and have made a formal application for membership. In addition, 250 Planning Schools were actively planning for change and intend to apply for membership, and 445 Exploring Schools were researching and discussing this approach as a basis for school change. Schools in 36 states, Great Britain, and Canada are involved in some way with the Coalition (CES, 1995).

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Although CES originally focused on high school reform—and the Common Principles are obviously written with high schools in mind—elementary and middle schools are also turning to the Coalition to guide their change efforts. Of the 216 Member Schools, 28 are elementary schools, 6 are K-12 schools, and 181 are junior/senior high schools. Member Schools exist in urban, suburban, and rural locations. All students in the school are the beneficiaries of reforms, and any school policy or practice that impedes students' mastery of essential skills and knowledge is a potential target of redesign.

What happens at the school level?

Sizer (1989) is quick to point out that no model exists of *the* good school, and no two Essential schools are alike. Even so, good schools evidence similar powerful ideas about their purpose and the needs of students that take different practical forms in particular settings. The Common Principles which guide each Coalition school are, briefly, as follows (Sizer, 1984):

- The school focuses on helping students learn to use their minds well.
- The school's goals are kept simple: each student will master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. Curriculum decisions are shaped by an understanding of the intellectual and imaginative competencies students need rather than by traditional "subjects"; the idea of "less is more" keeps everyone focused on student mastery instead of content coverage. Of this principle, Sizer (1989) says, "No exercise can be more difficult for a faculty than that of addressing what the student should be able to do to deserve to graduate and none can be ultimately as liberating" (p. 7).
- These goals apply to all students, although the means to achieve the goals vary with each student.

- The school strives to ensure that each teacher has direct responsibility for no more than eighty students, so that teaching and learning are personalized.

- Pedagogy emphasizes "student-as-worker" and "teacher-as-coach" as much as possible; students learn how to learn, and thus they teach themselves.

- A graduation diploma is awarded to a student upon successful demonstration of mastery of the school's program of essential skills and knowledge. This "Exhibition" replaces diploma requirements based on "time spent" and "credits earned." (Students who enter secondary school without the appropriate levels of competence in language and elementary mathematics receive quick and intensive remedial instruction.)

- The tone of the school explicitly stresses values of trust and decency (including fairness, generosity, and tolerance), and parents are treated as essential collaborators.

- The principal and teachers, committed to the school as a whole, see themselves, first as generalists in education and then as specialists in particular disciplines, and they expect to have multiple obligations in meeting students' needs (e.g., teaching, counseling, managing).

- The budget of the school does not exceed the budget of traditional schools by more than ten percent, but teachers' salaries stay competitive, time is set aside for collective planning by school staff, and the teacher load is reduced (see principle #4). In order to accomplish this, some services normally provided by traditional comprehensive schools may be phased out.

Although CES does not offer an explicit process for school reform, it stresses that schools will need substantial amounts of planning time during the summer months and academic year, and weekly (or even daily) meetings of key faculty are necessary when implementation is underway (Sizer, 1989). At least twelve months of planning usually precedes the first day of classes in a Coalition school. Such planning should include all school staff in discussions about a vision and about specific essential skills and knowledge, and planning time should be paid for, not voluntary, whenever possible (CES, 1989). The Coalition offices at Brown University have assisted some schools in this initial planning with a week-long summer seminar called "The Trek." This seminar prepares school teams to guide their faculty through the change process and then encourages three schools' teams to support each other as "critical friends" (CES, 1993).

Current Coalition schools have followed a variety of paths for redesign including creating a school-within-a-school and then expanding it or bringing together a variety of piecemeal efforts which already represented the Common Principles and then giving staff the freedom to develop these further. Committed leadership is required for an Essential school to take shape but so is solidarity and empowerment at the teacher level, especially in helping sustain changes despite principal turnover (CES, 1989).

How is instruction changed?

Each Coalition school makes its own decisions about instructional change, guided by the nine Common Principles, especially the one about student-as-worker/teacher-as-coach. One change which is often made in order to reduce teacher/student ratios—and which is consistent with the common principle on teacher generalists—is for teachers to teach subjects other than their original specialties, with quality maintained by collaborative teams of teachers. This and other reforms will require improved staff development which should emanate from teachers' expressed needs and be carried out over a substantial time period; "one-shot-five-times-a-year" approaches to staff development are unacceptable. Many Coalition schools create summer institutes to help teachers broaden and deepen their subject matter preparation (Sizer, 1989).

What improvements are expected?

Systematic, multi-site and multi-method studies of Coalition schools are currently being con-

ducted by CES researchers, but a 1989 issue of *Horace* (the Coalition's journal/newsletter) documented early progress in Coalition schools including increases in attendance and decreases in dropout rates compared to other schools in the area, increased achievement test scores over time, fewer discipline problems among Essential school students, and increases in the percent of students going on to higher education (Weinholtz, 1991). Other expectations for improvement include a more focused and cohesive curriculum, improved collegial relations among staff, and shared governance. One principal of an Essential school talked about how he resists the temptation to point to hard data as the sole proof of success: You can tell his Essential School students, he says, "for their articulateness, their high self-concept, and their own high expectations of their teachers" (CES, 1989, p. 4).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

Sizer (1989) discusses a number of difficulties with the Coalition's expectations for schools, many of which plague any school trying to change they way things are done. He emphasizes that faculty cannot be reluctant nor impatient, warns that schools are synergistic places in which important changes in one area always affect many other areas, and recognizes that planning and implementation take a lot of collective staff time. He has learned from early Coalition schools that Essential schools-within-schools have both their benefits (such as considerable freedom and quickly visible change) and their drawbacks (such as a "we-they" attitude across the school). Sizer also notes that, "Coalition schools in communities where superintendents and principals have come and gone suffer intensely" (Sizer, 1989, p. 7).

What resources are required?

Funding and other resource needs are dependent on the changes being made in any one school. There are no fees to join the Coalition, but most schools require at least $50,000 a year for three to five years for release time, travel, and professional development (CES, 1993).

What assistance is available?

CES central staff create and offer professional development programs for planning and member schools. They organize week-long Summer Institutes in various locations which help faculty with such issues as teambuilding, interdisciplinary curricula, and school leadership. CES also brings people together from across the country at an annual Fall Forum where educators share ideas and practices in formal workshops and informal conversation (CES, 1993).

CES also shares research findings on various schools' approaches and difficulties, reports about Exhibitions, school and teacher change, and research. Other topics are available, as well as a journal of the Coalition called *Horace* which is published five times annually and costs $20 a year. In addition, a video entitled *Dimensions of an Exhibition* provides examples and advice on designing student exhibition expectations for graduation; it is 38 minutes and costs $50.

A new research project called ATLAS—undertaken by the Coalition in partnership with Howard Gardner's Project Zero, James Comer's School Development Program, and others—is working with four school-community sites to look for new ways to structure an integrated curriculum and to improve, among other things, community-school relations, teacher preparation, use of technology, and evaluation practices. This work is funded by the New American Schools Development Corporation and will undoubtedly offer new insights for school change efforts (CES, 1993).

The Coalition has also created a number of supportive programs that branch out from the original Coalition idea. One of these "Re:Learning: From Schoolhouse to Statehouse," worked to connect individual school change efforts to policy and practice at the district and state levels. States that joined Re:Learning actively promote bottom-up school redesign by legislating supportive funds, hiring a state coordinator who works with the schools and the Coalition, and redefining policy, administrative relationships, and governance structures. A state-level committee meets regularly with school-level faculty and administrators to dis-

Case Study

Coral Springs Middle School

Coral Springs, Florida

When staff at Coral Springs Middle School began exploring the Coalition's ideas in 1989, they were already "reaching out to do different things" and taking a serious "look at teaching and learning," according to the school's Coalition Coordinator, Sue Bruining. As one of the district's first shared decision making schools, initiatives were in place at Coral Springs to get faculty talking and working together, and school staff found that the nine common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools gave them process ideas and a belief system to focus their efforts toward school improvement. They also felt that the Coalition would allow them to put more emphasis on professional development and teacher leadership opportunities which were needed. As a large school (over 2000 students in grades six through eight) with a mixed population of poor and middle-class students, Coral Springs needed to provide more personalized attention to students, and faculty believed the Coalition's framework, and Sizer's belief that "you can't teach kids who you don't know well," would help with this.

For over a year, Coral Springs entered a study phase during which staff met monthly as they read Coalition materials and other research and examined each common principle in comparison to existing school practices. As their plans for change took shape, they applied for membership in the Coalition, and the school was accepted in 1991. This original study group idea has continued with a veterans group of teachers who have been working with Coalition ideas for some time and a beginners group for new teachers at Coral Springs who need time to explore the principles and begin their own conversations about teaching and learning.

Many changes in instruction have resulted from Coral Springs' involvement with the Coalition. In addition to their focus on personalization, the faculty chose to emphasize writing across the curriculum, and they now have students writing in every subject, every day. As a result, the school's students recently scored highest on the writing portion of a county-wide assessment—an achievement made even more significant by the fact that the school's population is less advantaged than other schools in the district. Faculty have also taken seriously the Coalition concepts of "less is more" and "student as worker" to restructure curriculum and pedagogical practices, and they continue to explore uses

of portfolio assessment. In the 1995-96 school year, Coral Springs will implement interdisciplinary teacher teams and introduce a new daily schedule that will reduce teachers' class loads and create longer blocks of class time.

The experience of becoming part of a network of Coalition schools has been important to the Coral Springs faculty, and Bruining depends on a nationwide group of "critical friends" to help her help the school. With electronic mail, she enjoys communicating with Coalition teachers throughout the country. In addition, a number of Coral Springs faculty have joined the National Re:Learning Faculty, and the principal and a few other faculty have become fellows with the Coalition or facilitators for Coalition institutes for other schools. Some faculty have also joined the Annenberg Institute's National School Reform Faculty who will work together to improve their teaching over two years through observing and coaching each other and keeping portfolios about their practice.

One important result of Coalition-based reform, according to Bruining, is the capacity for teacher leadership that has been built at Coral Springs. She believes that such changes break through the isolation that separates teachers and give faculty an intellectual focus. Teachers have had opportunities to attend the Coalition's Fall Forum and Summer Institutes, and have then taught each other what they have learned. "There's so much craft knowledge in this faculty," notes Bruining. Visitors to the middle school have observed that, not only do teachers talk about teaching and learning more often and more seriously than at other schools, but students also seem to understand and make use of the "language of instruction."

Local collaboration has provided further assistance to the school and given staff another avenue for sharing their success with others. Broward County—Coral Springs' school district—has provided both philosophical and financial support (including two full-time coordinating positions) and has expanded Coalition-based reform from four district schools in 1989 to 58 schools in 1995. The district also recently held its own Spring Forum (at which teachers offered most of the workshops), and district and school staff are developing a network with Coalition schools in Dade County and schools in other nearby counties.

Coral Springs was recently selected as a National School of Excellence by the federal government. With its base of knowledge, collaboration, and experience and its support networks, ongoing improvement at Coral Springs seems likely. However, Bruining points out that the biggest constraints are the lack of time and the increased pressure that come with trying to bring about change.

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cuss changes in such areas as school finance, teacher certification, curriculum, and graduation requirements. Before joining Re:Learning, states got agreement from the governor and chief state school officer and developed a strategic plan for educational change over five years. This initiative, begun in 1988, grew out of a partnership between the Education Commission of the States in Denver and CES, and currently has twelve state members (CES, 1989, 1993)

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Read:

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The Accelerated Schools Project

Introduction

The Accelerated Schools Project offers educators a philosophy and process that will guide them in creating a unique vision for their school and in reaching their goals. An accelerated school is one in which all members of the school community—teachers, students, parents, administrators, and support staff—work together to make simultaneous changes in curriculum, instruction, and organization so that all students can succeed. The idea of "acceleration" grows out of a primary focus of such schools on ensuring that low-

achieving students learn faster through enrichment strategies, rather than slower in remediation programs, in order to catch up with their peers. Accelerated schools provide the best possible educational approaches to all students so that everyone receives the kind of education that used to be reserved for only "gifted" students.

Henry Levin and his associates at Stanford University helped create the first accelerated school in a San Francisco elementary school in 1987. With its focus on a democratic process for school reform and the achievement of at-risk students, the Accelerated Schools Project soon expanded to elementary and middle schools throughout the country. In the 1994-95 school year, the Accelerated Schools Project was in place in over 700 schools (50 of which were middle schools) in 37 states.

The specific goals of any accelerated school are determined by a participatory reform process, but the Accelerated Schools Project is built on some fundamental goals and beliefs, including the following:

> The achievement gap between at-risk and advantaged students must be closed, and all students should be brought into the educational mainstream not only in terms of test scores but also in self-confidence, educational aspirations, and communication and problem-solving skills.
>
> Middle-school students should be prepared to take advantage of all possible educational experiences in high school and post-secondary institutions.
>
> Every student has unique strengths and talents on which educational success can be built.
>
> Language development is critical to success in school and life and should be emphasized in all subjects.
>
> Classroom learning should be characterized by active, cooperative approaches and should develop students' problem-solving and higher-order analytical skills.
>
> Adults in the school community should work to create, for all children, the kinds of schools that they would want for their own children.

The primary purpose of the accelerated schools reform process, according to Levin (1994), is "the transformation of the school from a community that is dominated by mechanical practices imported from outside 'expertise' to one in which responsibility, expertise, and efficacy are internal to the school" (p. 6). When the school community becomes the center of expertise, then equity, trust, participation, communication, collaboration, reflection, experimentation, and risk-taking emerge, and satisfying outcomes for students result (Levin, 1994).

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Whole-school change is the target of this approach, and both elementary and middle schools are currently involved in the Accelerated Schools Project. Students at risk of failure are of particular concern, but addressing their needs means ensuring that all students have meaningful and enriching learning experiences.

What happens at the school level?

The Accelerated Schools Project details a process for inquiry and decision making that will lead to school restructuring. Schools can expect a full transformation to take about six years, although improvements after one year have been evidenced by schools currently involved in the project. The first step for new schools is to be trained in how to use the process to effect change and become self-renewing; the entire school—staff, parents, and students—participate in training provided by an accelerated schools coach during the first year.

The reform process that accelerated schools follow is underpinned by three democratic principles:

Unity of purpose—A collaboration among parents, teachers, students, support staff, admin-

Case Study

Berry Elementary School

North Charleston, South Carolina

Three years ago, Berry Elementary—an inner-city school with the highest poverty rate in Charleston County—suffered from low student test scores, poor attendance, serious problems with student behavior, and low staff morale. Faculty and administrators were "searching for an alternative" that would offer long-term solutions to school problems, according to Cathy Hebel, the school's behavior interventionist (and a key contact on Berry's school-wide changes). "They were tired of getting excited about quick-fixes and then seeing no results," says Hebel. Then they heard about the Accelerated Schools Project. They found the Accelerated Schools idea attractive because it was school-wide and teacher-centered. Through the recommended process of taking stock and forging a shared vision, Berry's staff talked about where the school has been, where it is now, and where they expected it to go. They determined the most significant areas in need of change and developed cadres to address those areas. "We dug deep to see what was really happening and focused on issues that we knew we could do something about," remembers Hebel. The cadres studied the issues and then said, "This is what we have the power to change."

Some of the issues that Berry is working to address include student discipline, students' reading ability, community involvement, teacher morale, and student morale (including how students feel about themselves, about school, and about Berry Elementary). Hebel's position of "behavior interventionist" was created so that one staff member focuses solely on student behavior. More about African-American history has been added to the curriculum, and students are learning how to use peer mediation to solve conflicts. Parents have been invited to participate in a GED preparation program, and teachers have created more powerful learning experiences that integrate subject areas. As a result of these and other activities over the last three years, vandalism has decreased significantly, student morale has shown improvement as indicated by surveys of student attitudes, parent involvement in school activities and as volunteers has increased, the suspension rate has gone

from one of the highest in the district to one of the lowest, student scores increase yearly on a standardized test of basic skills, and attendance is up. In addition, after the first year of working to improve student discipline, office referrals dropped 75 percent, and the number of reported student fights dropped from 384 to 124.

Hebel also observes that professional growth among the teachers is more common; teachers search out information in the community and bring it back to share with colleagues, and they have assumed new roles in the school. Through the Accelerated Schools Project, teachers found that they had to take on more responsibility but were also empowered to make changes that would lead to good results for students. As Hebel points out, any school's staff has a process by which decisions are made, but it is not always a fair one, and Accelerated Schools offered a process that included everyone and that would make plans a reality. Also, by forcing the staff to collect and analyze empirical data about the school, decisions for change are no longer based on one's "feeling" about a problem, and faculty and administrators have stopped swinging from one trend to another. Hebel also believes that, armed with empirical data, the school's principal can now make informed decisions about what staff positions he needs at the school and how to use resources more appropriately.

Working with the Accelerated Schools Project has also put Berry Elementary in a good position with regards to state policy. South Carolina recently passed Act 135 which requires each school to develop a five-year plan for improvement based on learner standards. Berry's existing cadres, such as one on higher-order thinking skills and one on socio-emotional development, fit well with the state's expectations for standards, and Berry's ongoing improvement process easily corresponds with the five-year plan idea. Berry will continue to focus on improving instruction now that student behavior is under control, and staff will be exploring means for more authentic assessment of student learning. Says Hebel, "It's fun here. This is a nice place to be. Children are learning, and teachers are staying."

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istrators, the district, and the local community results in a common set of goals for the school around which all improvements are centered. This results in a more cohesive educational experience for students and a greater commitment to school reform by all parties.

Empowerment and responsibility—Everyone in the broad school community should be given the opportunity to participate in educational decisions and should take responsibility for carrying out those decisions and seeing that they result in desired outcomes.

Building on strengths—All members of the school community bring abilities and interests they can contribute to the overall educational endeavor; rather than blaming failure on weaknesses, accelerated schools concentrate on strengths as they create powerful learning experiences for students (Levin, 1994).

Levin (1994) describes the accelerated schools reform process as follows:

Taking Stock—All members of the school community look at the school's present situation by collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data on such factors as the history of the school, the backgrounds and expertise of staff, school facilities, the culture of the local community, current curricular and instructional practices, attitudes and beliefs of school members, attendance rates, and test scores and other measures of student performance. These data will help the school assess its progress toward improvement.

Forging a Shared Vision—The entire school community, including students, talk about their visions for a dream school; adults should think about the kind of school that they would want for their own children. Together, everyone decides on a common vision and set of goals for their school.

Setting Initial Priorities—The school community then compares this vision to the reality revealed during the "taking stock" phase, and although many challenges may be identified, they decide on three to five priorities for initial focus, such as family involvement, scheduling, or mathematics.

Establishing Governance Structures—The governance structure recommended for the accelerated schools change process includes cadres, a steering committee, and whole-school meetings. All school staff, along with representative parents and students, select one of the priority challenges on which to work, and these groups become cadres that engage in problem-solving strategies to address their challenges. Representatives from each cadre, plus administrators and other school representatives (such as from each department or each grade level) form the steering committee, which oversees the work of the cadres, ensures communication across cadres, and considers recommendations. Finally, major decisions for changes in school operations of any kind are made by the school community as a whole, meaning all teachers, administrators, and support staff, as well as parent and student representatives.

Much of the school's process of discussion and decision making is guided by an "Inquiry Process." Inquiry will clearly lead each school in a different direction as it identifies its strengths, needs, and vision. The Inquiry Process involves (1) focusing on the real problem, (2) brainstorming solutions, (3) synthesizing solutions into an experimental program, (4) pilot testing the program, and (5) evaluating solutions and deciding on next steps (Hopfenberg, Levin, Meister, and Rogers, 1990). Although few specific recommendations for educational programming are made by the developers of the Accelerated Schools Project, the Inquiry Process is unlikely to lead schools to follow traditional lines of practice (Ascher, 1993).

The leadership of the principal is a critical factor in the accelerated schools reform process. S/he coordinates the activities of the cadres and other committees and secures support for the project in areas such as staff development, instructional materials, assessment tools, and time. As the "keeper of the dream," the principal cultivates the talents of school community members and helps everyone stay focused on the school's vision, especially after temporary setbacks or

"As the 'keeper of the dream,' the principal cultivates the talents of school community members and helps everyone stay focused on the school's vision, especially after temporary setbacks or disappointments."

(Levin, 1994)

disappointments (Levin, 1994). Support from the district is also necessary for resources, technical assistance, and an agreement to assess the school on "bottom-line performance expectations rather than compliance requirements" (Levin, 1994, p. 8).

Assessment of the progress toward change is an integral part of the activities of an accelerated school. Schools should check to make sure that agreed-upon decisions are put into practice and that all constituents in the school community are being included in the process. They also must evaluate outcomes such as student attendance, parent involvement in school events, and student performance. This last outcome is measured by standardized testing as well as by tailored assessments . . . created by school staff to assess their goals for student learning and . . . require students to use higher-order thinking skills (Levin, 1994).

How is instruction changed?

Each school develops its own "powerful learning experiences" according to its vision, needs, and capacity. These experiences require an examination of what is taught, how it is taught, and the context in which resources (materials, funding, time, etc.) are brought to bear on improving the "what" and "how" (Levin, 1994). Teaching and learning should emphasize imaginative thinking, complex reasoning, active involvement of the students, and curricula and assignments which connect to real-world problems and expectations. In addition, student learning and success should build on students' strengths and unique talents.

What improvements are expected?

Accelerated schools throughout the country report positive results. After four years in the project, the original Accelerated Schools site went from an overall ranking of 65th out of 69 schools to 23rd out of 72. In a Charleston, South Carolina school, the percentage of fifth graders scoring at or above the national average in reading, language arts, and mathematics rose from 31 percent before the school became involved in the project to 61 percent after. Other schools in the country report similar results in academic achievement as well as improvements in other areas: student and staff self-esteem and morale have increased, family attendance at meetings and conferences has dramatically improved, problems with student attendance and discipline have declined, and incidents of vandalism have been virtually eliminated (Accelerated Schools Project, 1993; McCarthy, Hopfenberg, and Levin, 1991). In one elementary accelerated school, students who thought they were intelligent rose from 13 percent to 81 percent in just two years (McCarthy, et al., 1991).

Communication and collaboration among school staff are significant outcomes of the Accelerated Schools Project. As one teacher said, "This has fundamentally changed the way I think of teaching. . .Now I think of teaching in terms of the whole school. Two years ago, I wouldn't have cared what the math department was doing; that's their business. Now, I want to know everything that's going on in the school" (Guido, 1992).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

Martha Luna, a staff member at the National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project, reports that many schools experience frustration at the slow rate of change; they want fast results and tend to jump to quick solutions instead of researching a problem thoroughly. She also suggests that one of the biggest challenges is getting staff used to collaborating (M. Luna,

personal communication, March 20, 1995). Predictably, observers of the project also warn that, if students do not get needed services and additional academic help and reinforcement of school learning at home, some students may become overwhelmed by accelerated learning (Stout, 1992).

What resources are required?

The Accelerated Schools approach is meant to be used with existing school resources, but there is some cost to the initial training and follow-up support provided by Accelerated Schools Project staff. Coaches at the local level receive training at the cost of $1,295 per person (plus travel expenses to the training site), and two 2-day mentorship visits from project staff to each school costs about $600 per day (plus expenses). Levin (1994) believes that none of the accelerated schools currently in the program required resources that exceeded even one percent of its original budget.

Time to bring together the whole school community to engage in the change process is a necessary resource. Levin (1994) suggests devoting all staff development days to accelerated school activities and either dissolving all existing school committees or folding them into the accelerated schools governance structure. Some schools have also extended school hours four days a week to allow for a half-day of planning one day a week, and others have sought small grants to pay for substitutes or for teacher stipends for after-hour meetings.

What assistance is available?

Staff at the National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project, located at Stanford University, coordinate the project and provide training, research, evaluation, and dissemination services. They also work closely with satellite centers and district- and state-wide networks. Regional satellite centers for elementary and/or middle schools have been created to bring assistance closer to local sites; such centers are currently located in Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Las Vegas as well as in Colorado, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.

Trained teams from districts, state departments, and universities also bring training to their local areas. Eight-day training workshops are offered for accelerated school coaches who then provide ongoing assistance to schools through weekly visits and assistance as needed. These coaches are mentored by staff from the National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project (Levin, 1994).

The National Center also prints a quarterly newsletter, *Accelerated Schools*, and offers a 25-minute overview videotape about the project. A manual that complements formal training by an accelerated schools coach, *The Accelerated Schools Resource Guide*, is also available. For a full list of other publications by Project staff, contact the National Center.

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View:

25-minute videotape: *Accelerated Schools for At-Risk Children*, available from the National Center.

Read:

Ascher, C. (1993). Changing schools for urban students: The School Development Program, Accelerated Schools, and Success for All. *Trends and Issues, No. 18*. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

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Onward to Excellence

Introduction

Onward to Excellence (OTE) is a systematic, school-based process for managing schoolwide improvement. Designed and coordinated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), OTE is based on over twenty years of research on effective schools and emphasizes helping schools target deficiencies in student performance and address these through more effective practices. According to its originators, Robert Blum and Jocelyn Butler (1987), "OTE provides a way for schools to move from effectiveness (all students master basic priority objectives) to excellence (most students achieve well beyond basic priority objectives)" (p. 1). OTE school staff learn about the effective schools research and engage in a structured, ten-step process for each improvement that they want to make.

Educators from throughout the nation contributed to the original design of the OTE process, and the process was first piloted in six schools in Alaska. After revisions, the design was further tested in five schools in Washington, and a third pilot was conducted with three schools in Oregon. By 1984, a complete and well-tested design for training and implementation had been developed (Blum and Butler, 1987). Currently, approximately 1200 schools throughout the country are involved in the OTE school improvement process.

The research on which the design is based focuses on six areas: (1) schoolwide practices that help students learn; (2) effective instructional practices; (3) leadership that supports teaching and learning; (4) effective methods of organizing and managing curriculum; (5) interrelationships among district, school, and classroom practices; and (6) processes that result in significant, durable change. In addition, a number of key concepts about school improvement, gleaned from the effective schools research, guide the OTE process. These include the belief that the school is the appropriate unit for focused improvement and all school staff should be involved in the process, changes in student performance are the primary indicator of the effectiveness of improvement efforts, school improvement must be managed, and school change takes place gradually over time (Blum and Butler, 1987).

Who/what is the target of improvement?

OTE has been successfully used to improve elementary, middle-grade, and high schools in urban, rural, and suburban areas. The specific improvements targeted by any one school are decided by school staff through the OTE reform process.

What happens at the school level?

Individual schools or whole school districts can contract with NWREL to have school staff trained in the OTE school improvement process. An experienced trainer comes to the district or local area and usually trains staff from a number of schools simultaneously. Training can begin at any time during the year. After an initial one-day workshop for principals, six half-day or one-day workshops are spread out over two years for "leadership teams" from each school. Between workshops, teams are expected to apply the process in their schools and complete specified tasks before the next training session. Up to three days of technical assistance per school are also provided by the trainer (NWREL, 1989).

Each training workshop starts with a review of the school improvement process, and teams reflect and report on the progress they have made so far. The trainer then introduces new concepts for continuing with the reform process, and teams apply these concepts through practice exercises, simulations, or work on actual team tasks. Teams then are asked to decide on next steps for their schools, including completing activities that are in progress. Throughout the teams' discussions, the trainer facilitates their work by observing, offering suggestions, and summarizing what was said.

OTE's ten-step process for school improvement is meant to be cyclical, so that once the whole process has been completed (over a two-year period), the school picks a new goal and starts again. The process is described (Blum and Butler, 1987; NWREL, 1990) as follows:

Step 1: Getting Started

The principal begins by forming a "leadership team" consisting of teachers, the principal, other school staff, a district-office representative, and, sometimes, parent or student representatives. This team works closely with the rest of the school staff throughout the process and involves parents and community members at different points. The principal also introduces OTE to all school staff, describes the ten-step process, and assures them of many opportunities to get involved in the effort.

Step 2: Learn About Research

The leadership team studies the research base on effective schooling practices (much of which has been compiled by NWREL). The team then shares this research with all school staff. According to one school principal, the research base gives the process credibility and reduces the need for justifying the selection of OTE to staff, and staff at another school emphasized that the research spurs people to talk about what and how they teach.

Step 3: Profile Student Performance

In order to focus efforts for improvement, the school develops a profile of current student performance at the school. The leadership team, with involvement of school staff, collects data regarding student academic achievement, behavior, and attitudes. The profile can also look at school resources and community perceptions of student learning. Profile data are clearly displayed and explained for all school staff.

Step 4: Set a Schoolwide Goal for Improvement

Based on data in the profile, the leadership team leads school staff and others in the school community in selecting a schoolwide goal to improve student performance. Evaluations of OTE schools have learned that schools should not work on more than one goal at a time, because this tends to confuse and scatter efforts.

Step 5: Check Current Instructional Practices

Before decisions about changes in practices can be made, information on strengths and weaknesses in current practices, related to the goal, must be gathered. The leadership team collects and analyzes data on teaching practices throughout the school. Classroom observations and surveys of staff, students, and parents may be used. Blum and Butler (1987) emphasize that "this data collection is not intended to focus on a small group of staff or on individual teachers in the classroom. The purpose of this information is to get a picture of practice across all content areas, grade levels and classrooms in the school" (p. 10).

Step 6: Develop a Research-Based Prescription for Improvement
At this point, the school is ready to select strategies for changing practice in order to meet the schoolwide goal. The leadership team reviews the effective schooling research in order to identify instructional methods and structural factors which "fit" the respective school and which have been shown to improve student performance in the goal area. This list of practices becomes a draft of the schoolwide prescription for improvement which is then shared with the whole school for revision suggestions.

Step 7: Plan for Implementation
When the prescription is ready to be put into action, the leadership team develops a plan for implementation that involves assigning staff various responsibilities, developing materials, locating resources, setting timelines, and designing a high-quality staff-development program to build needed skills.

Step 8: Implement the Prescription
New practices are implemented according to the plan, and the leadership team works with staff members as necessary.

Step 9: Monitor Implementation
The leadership team and other staff monitor the progress of the plan by keeping track of activities as they are completed and looking for changes in practice. The team also monitors student performance to determine the impact of the changes. Adjustments may need to be made to the prescription and implementation plan to enhance effectiveness.

Step 10: Evaluate Progress and Renew Efforts
The above cycle usually takes about two years, and at the end of this time, all school staff review the effort by looking at strengths and weaknesses of the plan and the results related to the original goal. Recommendations from staff, parents, and others in the community are sought for ways to improve the approach. The school should then decide whether to continue working on this goal or move to a new goal.

How is instruction changed?
Changes in instruction are dependent on each school's goals and prescription for improvement but must be grounded in research on effective practices.

What improvements are expected?
Many schools that have used the OTE process have attained their goals within specified time frames, and many others continue to make progress toward their goals. For example, in one OTE elementary school, the percentage of students reading below grade level dropped from 40 to 9 in five years. In an OTE high school, staff worked together to develop a schoolwide measure of student thinking and problem-solving skills (NWREL, 1989). In another high school, after several cycles of the OTE process, student attendance improved, referrals for disciplinary problems decreased, standardized test scores increased, and dropout rates declined. This school received national recognition as an exceptional school (NWREL, 1990).

In addition to improvements in student performance, surveys and interviews with OTE school staff revealed a range of positive changes in school operations including better staff attitudes about the school, more collaboration among staff, an improved school climate, and more staff involvement in schoolwide activities (Blum, Yap, and Butler, 1992). Working together toward a single goal also promotes a "can-do" attitude among school staff (Blum and Butler, 1987).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?
In a careful study of selected OTE schools, conducted in 1990, NWREL found that, although improvements in student performance are referred to by school staff as a significant accomplishment, actual data on student performance is often not as positive. School staff also cited problems that inhibited reaching school goals including lack of time to give to the process, problems assessing broad or abstract goals, and changes in school leadership (Blum, et al., 1992).

Case Study

Sale Elementary School

Columbus, Mississippi

The opportunity to use the Onward to Excellence process to improve Sale Elementary School came from an unusual source. Four years ago, the executives of a local, large manufacturing plant offered the district money for training in and implementation of some kind of school improvement process. Although Sale Elementary's principal, Rebecca Taylor, believes that OTE would have been just as effective without this "deal," the incentive came at the right time to get change in motion. OTE provided Sale staff with a focus toward a common goal, and staff liked the model because it was school based, so it could address the specific needs of their school and was not dependent on the entire district's actions or decisions. Taylor says that the strength of OTE is that it allows a school site to look at data which show what the real problems are and then decide what to do about them.

Sale, which serves students in kindergarten through third grade, began the OTE process by selecting a leadership team who helped the rest of the school staff profile the school. The entire staff then decided to focus their efforts on improving the overall achievement level of students as indicated by the total battery score on an annual standardized test. They studied research about effective practices and concluded that all young children learned well through tactile/kinesthetic strategies, so staff emphasized adding manipulatives and concrete learning experiences across the curriculum. For example, all teachers introduced math manipulatives into their math lessons, and the school designed an outdoor classroom that allowed students to study weather, animals, recycling, and other topics in a hands-on setting.

After the school staff felt that teaching through manipulatives was fairly well in place, they added other goals to further enrich the curriculum. Students are challenged to use higher-order thinking skills and to engage in cooperative learning tasks with peers and older students. Math concept learning has been linked to specific works of children's literature, and teachers are now searching for stories that reinforce science and social studies concepts. Teachers are also using math journaling to allow students to explain in words how they arrived at solutions to math problems. All of these decisions were based on reading and analyzing research on instructional practice, although Taylor says staff were

surprised and frustrated to find little research supporting the use of higher-order thinking with primary grade students.

Test scores for Sale students improved steadily during the first three years of reform, but the district has now implemented a new standardized test for which Sale has no baseline data on student performance. However, the new test appears to require more higher-order thinking, so Taylor believes scores will reflect this instructional emphasis at Sale in the coming years. The OTE process has also benefited school staff by encouraging more cooperative relations within and among schools. Sale's faculty consists primarily of veteran teachers who have the basics of teaching down and can concentrate on creative approaches to improvement; they have visited classrooms in other schools (while a fellow teacher covered for them) and have brought back ideas to share with their colleagues; and they continue to teach each other. Since all the schools in the district were trained in the OTE process, similar approaches to improvement are observable in other schools; Taylor believes about half the schools are still working seriously toward their OTE goals.

Money provided by the local business facilitated implementation, because Sale's allotment—about $7000—allowed them to purchase manipulatives and supplies for learning centers all at once, instead of over a number of years. However, Taylor points out that the OTE process was still a major undertaking. The first two years required a lot of faculty time and effort to attend the training sessions, develop the school profile, review the relevant research, and come to some decisions. District support has eased some of these difficulties; for instance, a policy of early dismissal on Wednesday afternoons allows more time for staff development, and the district assured schools that one-quarter of these afternoons could be devoted to individual schools' OTE activities. Now, after four years, Sale is focusing on continuing the improvements that have been successful and allowing the necessary time for all teachers to fully integrate these new practices into their classes.

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What resources are required?

Individual schools or groups of schools can contract with NWREL for training and technical assistance. For up to six schools, the cost is $7,500 plus travel and expenses. (If the trainer must travel more than 1,000 miles to the site, the cost is $9,400 plus travel and expenses.) For each additional school over six, the cost is $1,100 per school (NWREL, 1989). Other resource requirements will be determined by each school's goal and prescription for improvement, but time will need to be found for leadership team members and other school staff to engage in the process.

What assistance is available?

NWREL's well-tested model for training leadership teams and offering technical assistance is a primary form of support to individual schools. In addition, staff from the district office along with the trainer are expected to provide assistance to OTE schools by meeting with leadership teams to share ideas or review plans. This provides opportunities for leadership teams from various schools to come together to share progress and concerns, organize staff development on specific issues or practices, and plan formal celebrations to recognize results.

NWREL uses a train-the-trainer model to bring OTE training opportunities closer to local areas and reduce training costs to schools and districts. To locate suitable trainers—people with experience working in schools and knowledge of the research base and of techniques of professional development—NWREL has made agreements with school districts, regional service centers, colleges and universities, and state departments. These institutions choose staff to be trained in the OTE reform process and in preparing leadership teams; training occurs over two years, and then trainers are available to conduct workshops for schools (NWREL, 1993). In the Southeast, such agreements exist in Mississippi and Florida (see below for contact information).

The three editions of NWREL's *Effective Schooling Practices: A Research Synthesis* (1984, 1990, 1995) have been widely praised as genuinely useful for school improvement efforts. NWREL also publishes a "School Improvement Research Series" on issues ranging from classroom questioning to developing employability skills to fostering intercultural harmony in schools; the series also includes "snapshots" of individual schools that are successfully using the OTE process.

Assistance in educational improvement at the district/community level, that complements OTE, is also available from NWREL in a process program called "Creating the Future."

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Read:

Blum, R. E., & Butler, J. A. (1987, April). *"Onward to Excellence": Teaching schools to use effective schooling and implementation research to improve student performance.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC.

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NWREL's "School Improvement Research Series." (The complete 10-year series is available from NWREL and costs $200, but subsets on specific issues may also be ordered. Contact NWREL for a complete listing.)

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The Program for School Improvement and The League of Professional Schools

Introduction

The Program for School Improvement (PSI), affiliated with the University of Georgia, assists individual schools in the complicated process of on-going school renewal. Its guiding principle is that schools should be professional workplaces that use democratic processes and action research to identify and implement improvements. PSI's goals and processes for change are focused on removing barriers to collaboration among teachers and creating a learning community among all those in the school. In such an environment, students and teachers explore, take risks, and solve problems; parents and other members of the community are sought out for input on school practices; and all professionals in the school participate in democratic decision making about curriculum, instruction, and school-wide policies and programs.

The Program for School Improvement, under the leadership of Carl Glickman, started its work in 1983 with a few nearby schools that were trying to improve the educational experiences of their mostly disadvantaged student populations. By 1989, other schools throughout Georgia had heard of the success that these schools were having in educating students, and within five years, over ninety schools, mostly in Georgia but including some other parts of the U. S., were working with PSI. Together, these schools make up the League of Professional Schools.

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Individual elementary, middle, and high schools that seek comprehensive change are served by the Program for School Improvement. The needs of these schools are diverse, and plans for improvement are tailored to meet each school's goals.

Case Study

Clark Central High School

Athens, Georgia

As a member of the League of Professional Schools, Clark Central High School, with a diverse student body of over 1450 students, has made democratic decision making a way of life for all members of the school community. Primary to the school's democratic processes is its Team for School Improvement (TSI) on which eight elected faculty and staff (e.g., secretaries, counselors) serve three-year terms. Students, parents, and the principal also serve on the TSI, and every member, including the principal, has one, equal vote. No one has veto power over any decisions. Each teacher on the TSI also serves as a liaison to an interdisciplinary team of other faculty; these groups meet regularly to discuss what the TSI is doing and to let teachers share what they are thinking about or what is bothering them. In addition, the school holds occasional "faculty forums" which are open meetings; anyone can bring issues to the table. Through these efforts, school staff have gotten a much better understanding of the wide variety of perspectives held by people in the school community, and they are able to make careful, lasting decisions about school improvements.

Getting to this point has not come easy. Five years ago, when still operating under a top-down chain of command, Clark Central's administrators wanted to implement the League's ideas as a way of getting more people involved in decision making at the school. After a presentation by the League, agreement to try the approach came from a vote of over eighty percent of the school staff. A governing body was then created that was made up only of school employees and called the "executive committee," and, although it held open meetings, other faculty viewed it as an elitist group to help the principal get what he wanted. After the first year, staff renamed this group the Team for School Improvement and began to work on issues that would impact faculty's work experiences, such as a problem with access to copy machines. At the same time, school staff began attending League seminars and other workshops on such group process skills as facilitating and getting a committee to work together, and the liaison groups were formed. Decisions for change came slowly, but smaller committees on specific issues—such as one on attendance and discipline problems—helped focus efforts. Further refinements

came two years ago when a student asked to sit in on the TSI meetings. The committee soon realized the value of a student's perspective, and, the next year, two students and two parents, all with the right to vote, were added to the official TSI membership. Some faculty continue to disparage TSI and League activities as another come-and-go trend, but most are committed to the process and see that it is making a positive impact.

Now that Clark Central's democratic decision-making process is fairly well established, the community is beginning to tackle new challenges, according to Harry Cooper, a social studies teacher and chair of the TSI in 1994-95. For instance, extensive study by a committee and presentations to the staff led the whole faculty to vote on a block scheduling plan to be implemented in coming years. Staff development money which had been earmarked for skill-building related to shared governance will now be redirected toward preparing teachers to teach effectively within a block schedule. The school is also examining the possibility of applying for "charter school" status as outlined by Georgia state law (see Section Two–Charter Schools). Also, the TSI has become involved in personnel matters and recently worked together to hire two new assistant principals. As another challenge, TSI members continue to seek better ways to address attendance and discipline problems and have created a student appeals court on which three students, one parent, and one teacher sit. In addition to all of these activities, a "chair for action research" has recently been designated to help the school get started on a five-year strategic plan.

Cooper is committed to the process that Clark Central has instituted and has observed the useful role that it plays in helping the school improve. With everyone involved from the start in making decisions for change, faculty and staff are more dedicated to success in implementation. But, faculty are generally too busy to review all the necessary information before making a decision, so they appreciate the "screening process" provided by the TSI members who can study an issue in depth, educate their colleagues, and then bring them into the decision-making process. Cooper has also found that the biggest challenge to shared governance is communication, and he stresses that it is an ongoing effort to find the best avenues and the right balance of meetings, memos, etc. to ensure that everyone "knows what's going on." He also warns that everyone must be patient with this process; decision making is slow when over 100 faculty and staff are included, and the principal may be tempted to fall into old patterns of leadership just to hurry things along. Visitors from other League schools have been impressed by the progress made at Clark Central, and Cooper is pleased and proud to be a part of it. "It makes me feel good," he says, "that my opinions as a teacher are valued. I feel better about being employed here when everyone gets to make a contribution."

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What happens at the school level?

The decision to participate in school-wide restructuring, with the assistance of PSI, must be made by at least eighty percent of the school staff. Additionally, district-level staff and members of the school board must support a school's desire to take creative, independent, and responsible action for change.

After initial staff development and discussion facilitated by a representative from PSI, each school decides, based on its own criteria for success, the strategies it wants to employ to meet these goals. According to the PSI brochure, "Decisions are made by all members of the faculty based on knowledge of student needs, effective instruction, community expectations, moral considerations concerning educational programs, and methods and products of research." Faculty and administrators in League schools learn how to conduct action research on the culture and happenings in their own building; they gather information to help them identify problems, evaluate practices, and create solutions. Formal and ad hoc school committees conduct action research and then present data and recommendations to all school staff for discussion and consideration.

How is instruction changed?

The Program for School Improvement maintains that decisions about what and how to teach are best made by those closest to the needs of students in a particular classroom and school. Therefore, no specific recommendations for instructional practices are recommended, but schools that develop the kind of professional learning environment which PSI promotes tend to emphasize problem solving, cooperative learning, and other inquiry-oriented approaches. At the same time, such schools set high standards for student learning and employ demanding assessment techniques.

What improvements are expected?

Specific results of this reform approach vary with each school according to what they want to improve, but PSI staff point out that it usually takes at least two years before any significant changes can be recognized and usually four to five years for widespread results. However, schools can expect that by properly implementing shared governance procedures, communication throughout the school will be improved, and the school will model democracy for the community. In addition, by conducting action research, school staff will have tangible indicators of their accomplishments and will see the effects of various programs that they might have in place. On a recent open-ended questionnaire distributed by PSI, 85 percent of League schools reported that instructional practices in their schools had improved, and that students were benefiting from the restructuring. Schools also expressed satisfaction with the process and its results: they continue to stay in the League year after year (which costs $1000 annually for schools in Georgia).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

This reform requires time for teachers and administrators to participate in meetings, wrestle with decisions, and conduct research. Also, because it is school based, the policies of school districts can become barriers to school-level decisions.

What resources are required?

Most resource requirements depend on what improvements a school decides it wants to make. Schools in Georgia who join the League of Professional Schools pay an annual fee of $1000, but schools in other parts of the country will have to decide among schools in their own branch of the League if such dues will be required. There are costs involved in attending meetings and in networking among schools (i.e., mileage, substitute salaries, etc.).

What assistance is available?

PSI staff provide training and consultation, based on the latest research, to help schools implement shared decision making and practice action research. At the start of the reform process, school staff attend a two-day planning and orientation workshop that allows the school to identify factors in the school which help or inhibit change; examine research and case studies on successful staff development, curriculum change, and action research projects; and develop a plan for shared governance. PSI also

organizes follow-up meetings for schools and plans summer institutes and an annual conference for all League schools. Information is also shared among the schools through a bi-annual newsletter called *In Sites*.

To assist schools in making informed decisions about school practices, PSI operates an information retrieval service; schools can request documentation on successful school practices (such as cooperative learning or whole language) that have been compiled by the U.S. Department of Education's National Diffusion Network. PSI also offers access to demonstration schools that allow outside educators to observe a learning community at work and to learn from professionals in these schools.

In addition to these activities, the Program for School Improvement also helps school boards and districts develop policies and allocate resources that will enable educational improvement in individual schools.

For further information:

Contact:

Program for School Improvement
124 Aderhold Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
706-542-2516
800-578-2516 (from within GA)

Ask PSI for the contact information for a demonstration school in your area.

Read:

Allen, L., & Glickman, C. D. (1992). School improvement: The elusive faces of shared governance. *NASSP Bulletin, 76*(542), 80-87.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. R. (1994). *Empowering teachers: What successful principals do*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Blase, J., Blase, J. R., Anderson, G. L., & Dungan, S. (1995). *Democratic principals in action: Eight pioneers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Glickman, C. D. (1993). *Renewing America's schools: A guide for school-based action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Allen, L., & Glickman, C. D. (1992). School improvement: The elusive faces of shared governance. *NASSP Bulletin, 76*(542), 80-87.

Lunsford, B.)1995). A League of Our Own. *Educational Leadership*, 52(7), 59-61.

Two other sources were used to compile this description: PSI's detailed brochure and a personal communication with Lew Allen, Director of National Outreach at PSI, on March 9, 1995.

The Center for Leadership in School Reform

Introduction

The Center for Leadership in School Reform (CLSR), headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, has developed a comprehensive plan for initiating and sustaining system-wide restructuring. Its purpose and activities focus on the challenges of the change process at all levels of the educational system, and its ultimate goal is to help reorganize schools around the needs of students and the work that students are expected to do. CLSR's activities are founded on the belief that the purpose of schools is to engage students in learning activities that require them to use ideas and information to produce intellectual products and solve problems. These activities should help them build the skills and attitudes necessary to participate in and contribute to their communities and to this information-based society. CLSR's approach to restructuring draws from principles underlying effective business practices such as quality team work and shared leadership.

Phillip Schlechty founded CLSR in 1988 because he was convinced that "without access to high-quality support from outside agencies whose only purpose is advancing the cause of reform in education, it is unlikely that local leaders can bring about the kinds of fundamental changes that are needed" (CLSR Brochure, p. 1). Superin-

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tendents, governors, and business leaders have praised past work of the Center for Leadership in School Reform. CLSR is currently involved in partnerships or long-term consulting relationships with numerous school districts throughout the country.

Through a partnership with the Center, educators within a school district will be involved in assessing the district's current state of affairs and capacity for creating lasting improvements, in creating and realizing a vision for their schools, and in networking with other educational leaders. The Center and the district partner must agree on common goals aimed at enabling the district to facilitate changes at the building and classroom levels. These goals include the following:

- Giving priority to the student as the primary customer of schools and to student success as the primary objective of educators' work.
- Developing a shared understanding of the problems that have led to the need for fundamental restructuring; these problems should be compelling and persuasive but inspire hope, not despair.
- Garnering support for reform efforts from teachers, administrators, boards of education, business and civic leaders, parents, opinion makers in the community, and taxpayers in general.
- Creating schools in which teachers are leaders and principals are leaders of leaders and in which all school staff are committed to continuous improvement.
- Developing an environment that is flexible, responds quickly to problems and needs, and encourages innovation.
- Encouraging and supporting collaboration among all groups and community agencies that provide services to children.
- Providing training, incentives, and support for all those working for change.

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Entire school districts are the primary target of the work of the Center. Although the elementary and secondary schools within those districts will undergo restructuring as part of the reform effort, CLSR works through district and community leaders to instigate more widespread change. According to the Center's informational brochure, "CLSR work is grounded in the belief that changing the roles of teachers and principals requires complementary changes in the roles of boards of education, superintendents, and central office personnel, as well as changes in the relationships between schools and families and schools and communities" (pp. 1-2).

What happens at the school level?

With its focus on district-wide reform, CLSR facilitates the deep involvement of parents, community members, teachers, principals, and other school staff in the restructuring process that will affect their individual schools as well as the other educational organizations in the district. This restructuring process is outlined in some detail in the Center's informational packet and will be summarized below:

The Partnership

District leaders who are committed to the fundamental philosophy and goals of the Center may sign an agreement to become long-term partners with CLSR. The Center's goals (summarized above) focus on creating an environment in which continual improvement can thrive; each district will use the restructuring process to make its own decisions regarding changes in the delivery of services, instructional practices, or curricula.

The Marketing Strategy

The district superintendent and the president of CLSR will then develop a plan for informing various constituencies about the partnership and the basic beliefs that will frame an approach to restructuring. Special attention will be given to teachers' needs to understand the goals and their expected role as leaders.

The Liaisons

The superintendent will appoint someone to work as a liaison with CLSR, and CLSR will assign someone to serve as a liaison to the district. These persons will have day-to-day responsibility for the progress of the partnership

restructuring effort and will facilitate the development of a first draft of an action plan for the district to pursue its restructuring goals.

The District Profile
CLSR staff and selected staff from the district (representing various roles within the educational system) will use interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, and document analysis to prepare a report which outlines the district's capacity to sustain a major restructuring effort. This profile will document the existing situation in the district with regard to effective support systems, policies that inhibit improvement, and views of various members of the educational community about the problems schools face and the willingness of individuals to commit themselves to restructuring.

The Steering Committee
The liaisons, superintendent, president of CLSR, and the president of the local teachers' union will then create a committee of teachers, principals, district staff, board members, and others who will act as a group to share insights and help shape the direction of the changes.

The Strategic Assessment System
Individual schools get involved in the restructuring effort when faculty participate in assessing the workings of their schools. A team of faculty are trained to develop a plan for collecting data about the schools' capacities and operations, and then data are collected and analyzed. Results are presented to the rest of the faculty in the form of a trial; evidence to support and refute the school's position in relation to restructuring goals is offered, and then faculty divide into small groups to discuss the evidence. An action plan for each school's restructuring efforts is founded on the results of these discussions.

Although much of this process focuses on the organization and support systems of educational institutions, CLSR emphasizes that restructuring requires everyone to articulate and discuss his or her beliefs about what schools should be doing. According to CLSR, "Schools, and entire school communities, must clarify their beliefs about: the purpose of schools; the ability of students to learn; the factors that determine the opportunity to learn; the role of family and community; the kind of society for which children are being prepared; the proper focus of school activity; the rules, roles, and relationships that should govern behavior; and the obligations and role of the entire system."

How is instruction changed?
CLSR does not prescribe any specific recommendations for changes in instruction. Such changes are decided by individual schools as they engage in the restructuring process. CLSR provides a framework for instruction that focuses on creating quality work for students as a first step in students' creating quality work. CLSR works with teachers and other leaders so that they will understand and incorporate into their work those qualities which cause the students to engage in the work, persist with the work, and feel satisfaction and delight in the products of the work. Through this process students should learn what is culturally significant and valued by parents, the community, and society.

What improvements are expected?
The districts and schools that have taken this approach to restructuring have seen an increased focus on the quality of work that students are given, increased participation of school staff in the operation of their schools, an improved decision-making process in the schools and throughout the district, and an increased satisfaction among staff in their work lives. In the long term, school districts have learned how to manage change and solve problems in new and more effective ways, so that they can continue to improve without the assistance of CLSR. Although many districts report improved student performance in school and active engagement of learners, changes in test scores or other hard data cannot be directly correlated with involvement in this school restructuring process, as many of these schools have other improvement programs in place.

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?
School districts who are working with CLSR offer the kind of criticisms that are expected of a comprehensive approach of this kind: the pro-

Case Study

Tupelo Public Schools

Tupelo, Mississippi

Former Superintendent Mike Walters described Tupelo as a progressive community with a growing economy, lots of high-paying jobs, and a commitment to strong public schools. As such, Tupelo enjoyed a relatively good public school system for a number of years, but when Walters came to the district five years ago, community members and educators stressed that a lot of children were still falling through the cracks, and significant changes in the system seemed to be required to ensure that *all* students experienced success. Walters decried a system based on a normal curve of student achievement which meant that some students would always fail. From a brief talk with him about school reform, it became clear that he thought systematically about educational problems—blaming structures rather than people—and was determined to uncover the systemic problems in Tupelo that create barriers to change. In 1991, Walters invited Schlechty to visit Tupelo and assist educators in thinking through the purpose of education and the needs of the schools and community. The Tupelo Public Schools then became one of the first partners with the Center for Leadership in School Reform.

According to Walters, the critical role that CLSR can play in district-wide improvement is in helping "communities frame problems with the current system" and "think about how they get from where they are to where they want to be." The first step in restructuring, he believes, has to take place in people's minds, so that they can recognize failures of the current system and be able to conceive of another way of doing things. Staff at CLSR provided a focus and dialogue for rethinking the way schooling happens and bringing underlying assumptions to the surface.

In Tupelo, this meant recognizing the detrimental nature of the graded structure of schooling; grade levels in school do not reflect what is known about the varying developmental nature of growing children, and the A, B, C grades schools give suggest that failure is expected of some students. Said Walters, "Rather than flexible standards and a rigid system, we need high, inflexible standards and a system that supports students to reach these standards." Thus, Tupelo instituted non-graded primary schools (no letter grades and no age-grade divisions) that were organized around the developmental needs of children. Assessment was re-

formed to make use of student portfolios that allow students to set standards for themselves and encourage teachers to evaluate a student in relation to his or her improvement, rather than in competition with peers. Parents were also included in this assessment through video report cards; the teacher interviews the student on videotape and then sends the tape home. Cooperative learning in all grade levels was also stressed, so that students learned from peers and from students older and younger than themselves.

Another systemic issue that came to the fore in Tupelo was the quality management notion of "doing it right the first time." Educators in the district focused more on preschoolers' needs to be prepared for school, and district resources have been shifted away from remedial programs and into preschool programs and parenting education. For students who were already in middle school and so did not have the benefit of such prevention measures, Tupelo created an accelerated, alternative middle school for students who are at least two years behind grade level. All the middle schools implemented practices that addressed the unique needs of early adolescents. All of these changes and others—such as integrating curricula around thematic units and changing the nature of student work to emphasize critical thinking and problem solving—required "massive retraining" of school staff, which has cost the district some money. However, Walters pointed out that Tupelo was fortunate to have access to substantial private funds from the community.

Tupelo educators undertook many restructuring efforts as a result of their examination of systemic issues, but these efforts were not without difficulties. As the number of at-risk students coming in to the system continued to increase, the schools were challenged to figure out how to meet these students' special needs while still giving all the other students what they required for success. In addition, many staff in the school system had to be convinced that the system needed changing. Walters observed that teachers were still developing their commitment to restructuring and to the need to set higher standards for students; many did not have the necessary skills to make the changes, and a few tended to act as saboteurs. Some parents were also a barrier to change in Tupelo because they felt that their children succeeded in the traditional system. Walters also talked about political barriers from certain constituents who were misinformed about school changes, did not trust anything new, and made claims that the schools were trying to take over students' minds.

Despite these challenges, Walters remains convinced that system-wide change is the only solution to the problems of education in the nation today. He says, "I don't think we had any choice but to do it." With the help of outside educational thinkers, such as the staff at CLSR, Walters believes that significant restructuring is possible, but admits that it is "tough work."

For more information, contact:
Tupelo Public Schools
P.O. Box 557
Tupelo, MS 38802
601-841-8859

cess takes so long and requires a great commitment of energy, and day-to-day attention, including significant retraining. CLSR staff recognize the problems that this can present but feel it is important for districts to take the time necessary to study themselves (instead of having outsiders do a quick audit of the school system's activities) and involve many people in the process of reform, or meaningful, lasting change will not occur.

What resources are required?

CLSR's work is funded by fees from school districts who request its assistance. Fees are charged by the day to cover costs for training, consultation, and all activities of the liaison assigned to the district. Some districts have received grants from foundations to fund their partnership with CLSR, and, occasionally, a business or foundation will give a grant to CLSR to work with a specific district. The number of days of assistance provided to a school district depends on the size of the district and its needs and can range from 20 to over 200.

In addition to these costs, one district-level staff member's time will have to be devoted to the duties of partnership liaison, and many personnel from schools and administrative offices will have to be given the time to participate in team meetings, self assessment, planning, developing processes for results-oriented decision making, and other restructuring tasks.

What assistance is available?

From the above descriptions, it is clear that ongoing support and consultation is provided by CLSR staff to any partner district. The Center will also assist these districts in locating funding from foundations and businesses to support the restructuring.

Additionally, CLSR staff conduct workshops and seminars for administrators, teachers, board members, community groups, and others as requested. This training is tailored to meet the specific needs of the district, allows for follow-up as needed, and may be used to develop a cadre of local-level trainers or facilitators. Topics for such workshops include elementary school restructuring, middle school restructuring, high school restructuring, the change process, the

"CLSR provides a framework for instruction that focuses on creating quality work for students as a first step in students' creating quality work."

CLSR district profile (including strategic planning), decision making, designing quality work for students, developing leadership for school redesign, developing a set of beliefs, marketing the problems, process and facilitation skills/team building, and school-based assessment.

The Center also organizes a Fellows Program that brings together practitioners from school systems around the country to share their expertise and restructuring experiences with educators in other districts.

For educators who are not involved in a partnership with the Center, CLSR offers seminars that introduce its philosophy and services, provides occasional training or facilitation to help districts identify goals and needs, and conducts national institutes to bring educational leaders together.

For further information:

Contact:

Center for Leadership in School Reform
950 Breckenridge Lane
Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40207
502-895-1942

Read:

Schlechty, P. C. (1990). *Schools for the 21st century: Leadership imperatives for educational reform.*

Schlechty, P. C., & Cole, R. W. (1992). Creating standard-bearer schools. *Educational Leadership, 50*(3), 45-49.

References

Two sources were used to compile this description: CLSR's detailed information packet and a

personal communication with Marty Vowels, Vice President of CLSR, on March 9, 1995.

The National Alliance for Restructuring Education

Introduction

The National Alliance for Restructuring Education, a program of the National Center on Education and the Economy, emphasizes redesigning the entire system of education so that all students can achieve at high levels. As an "alliance," it works as a partnership of states, school districts, corporations, universities and non-profit organizations. The Alliance seeks to alter policy and practice at all levels—school, district and state—so that the systems in which schools are embedded support the changes in the classrooms that affect learning. The Alliance believes that only when schools, communities, districts and states are organized for high performance will large numbers of schools, not just a few, routinely produce high levels of student performance.

The Alliance was founded in 1989 by a number of states and urban school districts that were seeking assistance in making system-wide changes. The current state partners in the Alliance are Arkansas, California, Kentucky and Washington; the current district partners are Chicago, Illinois; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Rochester and White Plains, New York; and San Diego, California. The Milton Hershey School in Hershey, Pennsylvania, an independent K-12 school, is also a partner. Some of the institutions that work with the Alliance to create products and services to support its comprehensive restructuring design include Apple Computer Inc., the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, Jobs for the Future, the Center for the Study of Social Policy and the Xerox Corporation. In 1992, the New American Schools Development Corporation provided funding for the Alliance as one "break-the-mold" approach to educational improvement; the Alliance work is also supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Who/what is the target for improvement?

State departments of education, school district offices, local boards of education, community service agencies and schools serving all grade levels are intended targets of the Alliance reform strategy. Because of its systemic focus, the Alliance enlists as partners states and school districts, not individual schools; however, these partners identify a cadre of schools to work with the Alliance to implement a restructuring program and plan to expand the number of schools each year to achieve a critical mass of restructured schools. The goal of restructuring is to enable all students to achieve high standards of academic learning and be prepared for the demands of post-secondary education, 21st-century jobs, and life in a democratic society.

What happens at the school level?

As a systemic reform effort, the Alliance emphasizes that changes need to occur at the school, district and state levels. At each level, partners in the Alliance have organized their work around five "design tasks," which must be addressed simultaneously in order to effect sweeping change (National Alliance, 1994):

1. Standards and Assessments

The Alliance partner New Standards (which was established in 1991 by the NCEE in collaboration with the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh) has developed high standards for student performance in English language arts, mathematics, science and applied learning (the skills needed for the modern workplace), and is developing an assessment system to measure student progress toward those standards. The standards stress that students must demonstrate mastery of academic knowledge and skills and also that they must be able to apply that knowledge and those abilities to complex, real world problems. All Alliance partners have agreed to use the New Standards system, either adopting the standards and assessments or linking their own, locally

developed standards and assessments to those of New Standards.

2. Learning Environments

Teachers and other staff members in Alliance schools are redesigning curricula to match the standards and are creating instructional methods to help all students reach the standards. These changes reflect the most current research on student learning and experience with effective practices. The use of state-of-the-art information technologies is emphasized in Alliance schools, as are the integration of applied learning competencies with academic skills and knowledge and options for work-based experiences and mentorships to help prepare students for the world of work.

3. Community Services and Supports

With help from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, communities in Alliance sites are working on ways to bring social and health services together with schools to help improve the health and well being of children and families and enable young people to learn at high levels.

4. High Performance Management

Alliance schools, school district offices and state departments are restructuring to organize themselves for high performance. They do so by setting goals, giving autonomy and resources to professionals to determine how to meet the goals, and holding the professionals accountable for meeting the goals. This design task focuses on integrating the work across design tasks by enabling leadership teams to coordinate and plan for results using data on student, school, and system performance.

5. Public Engagement

Keeping the American public involved in the educational system is an important Alliance goal; Alliance schools engage parents and members of the general public in a meaningful dialogue about the goals of schooling and how to achieve them. The schools also enable parents to serve as effective partners in the education of their children.

The central component of the Alliance vision for education is the Certificate of Initial Mastery, a credential that will be awarded to students who attain high standards of performance in English language arts, mathematics, science and applied learning. The CIM standard will be set as high as the best-performing countries expect their students to perform at about age 16. New Standards is developing the standards and assessments needed to put the Certificate into place, but schools, districts, and states are using the existing standards and assessments in developing a CIM system. They recognize that it will take a redesign of the entire education system, across all five design tasks, in order for all but the most severely disabled students to reach the standards and attain a Certificate (National Alliance, 1994).

Using the Certificate system as a framework, Alliance schools treat teachers and principals "like true professionals, no longer told by the system just what to do and when to do it, but expected to make all the important decisions about how to get the job done" (National Alliance, 1994, p. 13). Alliance schools are given the freedom to reorganize everything from the use of time and space to the allocation of funds and responsibilities of staff, while they are held accountable for results—for enabling students to meet high standards of performance. The Alliance provides tools and assistance to enable schools to implement their redesign, along with diagnostic instruments that allow schools to monitor their progress toward reform.

High performing Alliance schools have implemented a number of practices that have proven successful in enhancing student learning. In elementary schools, teachers work in teams to plan instructional units for a group of students; they use portfolios to determine where student work shows progress and where additional assistance might be needed. In elementary and middle schools, teachers stay with students for more than one year, to get to know them well as learners and as individuals. In middle and high schools, teachers work in teams to create learning experiences that cross disciplinary lines. In high schools, teachers break up large schools into

smaller units, or houses, to provide closer connections between students and adults.

Alliance schools also open their doors to the community in many ways to provide students with access to resources that enhance student learning. Schools remain open before and after class hours and on Saturdays in order to provide additional time for students who need it and to foster links between school and the community. Schools also enlist business partners to serve as mentors to assist students in their work by showing how what they learn applies to the world outside of class. Schools employ information technology to connect students to peers and experts around the world. In addition, schools provide means to connect students and families with health and social services in the community.

How is instruction changed?

The key characteristic of instruction in Alliance schools is that it is connected directly to standards for student performance. Administrators and teachers select curriculum materials and develop instructional units by determining whether their method will enable students to meet the standards; if it does not, they try another approach. As the Alliance points out, "The learning environment is a partnership among the student, parents, the community and the school in which all know the performance criteria and all have a stake in ensuring that students achieve the Certificate" (National Alliance, 1995).

Alliance schools provide the following learning opportunities:

- All students gain a strong foundation of content knowledge as they develop thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The teacher acts as a coach while engaging students in constructing knowledge and practicing skills.
- Students work alone and with others in teams, collect and interpret data and identify sources of problems, and use a wide range of technologies to gather, analyze and report information; students learn how to learn and to help others learn.
- Students learn from one another by engaging in "accountable talk" and by demonstrating their learning to one another.

As part of its work with its partner New Standards, the Alliance is also creating new kinds of assessments of student learning that blur the distinction between instruction and assessment. In Alliance schools, a key assessment tool is a portfolio. Students collect work in portfolios that demonstrate the depth, breadth and quality of their learning, as well as evidence of growth. A school's expectations for the work in portfolios is tied to the standards students must meet; portfolios are evaluated by teachers, parents, business representatives and others according to those standards.

Helping students prepare for career possibilities is another important focus of the Alliance. A key element in this strategy is the integration throughout the instructional program of academic and applied learning competencies. In addition, schools beginning in the elementary grades provide opportunities for students to see how their learning is connected to the world outside of school. Such opportunities not only increase student engagement in their learning by making it more meaningful but also introduce students to a range of career possibilities. High schools, meanwhile, make available apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities for students who have earned a Certificate of Initial Mastery.

What improvements are expected?

The Alliance was formed from the belief that implementing all five design tasks at all levels increases in the likelihood that sites will see improvements in student learning. Although the Alliance is only a few years old and is still refining its strategies, one site that is moving toward implementing its reform agenda—Kentucky—shows evidence of success. In Kentucky, the state assessment system is tied to high standards and the state annually reports results from individual schools. The Kentucky Education Reform Act includes a strong incentive system that rewards significant improvement. Under that system, schools in which student

performance increased substantially earned cash bonuses equal to about $2,000 per teacher; schools where performance declined became eligible for assistance from a state-appointed 'distinguished educator.'

The Kentucky results suggest that the Alliance work is paying off by helping schools change to improve student performance. Of the 15 Alliance schools in Kentucky, 13, or 87 percent, earned cash awards in 1995, the first year of the program, compared with 38 percent of schools statewide. In the wake of these results, which outpaced those of any other reform program in the state, the state commissioner of education agreed to expand the Alliance work in Kentucky.

Elsewhere, Alliance sites are showing signs of progress that will likely lead to improvements in student results down the road. In Pittsburgh, for example, the district redesigned its central office to give substantially greater authority and resources to local schools to enable them to make needed changes to improve student performance. And in Washington, the state legislature passed an education reform law that will put the Certificate of Mastery into practice by the year 2000 (National Alliance, 1994).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

As part of the Public Engagement design task, the Alliance works with school districts and states to listen to the public's concerns and develop strategies to respond to them. In San Diego, for example, the district conducted numerous public events, including cable television discussions, to explain to the public a portfolio system—before putting the system into place. In Edmonds, Washington, meanwhile, the district enlisted considerable public input before developing a new report card that shows student performance against standards.

What resources are required?

The Alliance estimates that high performing schools will need about $260 more per pupil to institute the necessary changes; half of this cost is for instructional technologies. In addition, the Alliance charges schools and districts for products and professional development services; these costs vary depending on the needs of a particular site (National Alliance, 1994).

What assistance is available?

The Alliance central staff and partners provide a range of products and technical assistance to help district and state efforts in all five design task areas. In addition, the Alliance sponsors an annual national conference and links schools, districts, and states through a telecommunications network.

Locally, Alliance sites provide professional development at School Development Centers. At these sites, which are technology-rich schools that demonstrate the integration of the five design tasks, teachers and principals from visiting schools spend several days in practicums, observing and learning from students and teachers in action and developing plans for redesigning their home school.

For further information:

Contact:

National Alliance for Restructuring Education
Suite 750
700 Eleventh Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-783-3668
202-783-3672 (fax)
nareinfo@ncee.org

View:

High Performance Schools: No Exceptions, No Excuses (a 17-minute video)

Read:

The Certificate of Initial Mastery: A Primer (1994)
States Begin Developing the Certificate of Initial Mastery (1994)
Designing the New American High School (1994, by Marc Tucker)
National Alliance for Restructuring Education: An Orientation to the Design (1995)

(The above video and publications are available from the National Center on Education and the Economy, Publications Department, 39 State Street, Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14614-1327; 716-

546-7620. Contact the National Center for prices.)

References:

National Alliance for Restructuring Education. (1994). *National Alliance for Restructuring Education* (brochure). Washington, DC: Author.

National Alliance for Restructuring Education. (1995). *National Alliance for Restructuring Education: An Orientation to the Design* . Washington, DC: Author.

Comprehensive Change Through Management Innovations

The following section profiles three options for comprehensive school reform through a change in management. Unlike the above approaches which involved existing school staff in deciding what changes to make and in managing the process, these strategies necessitate that the school and district contract with an outside group who will decide what improvements to make, will oversee the changes, and will be held accountable for results. (This new management may or may not involve changes in existing staff including administrators.) The first two options below are offered by for-profit companies and represent a growing but still controversial move toward the private management of public schools. The third option, charter schools, is a broad policy concept which encompasses the creation of new public schools through contracts and sponsors and may lead a school to seek out a private firm's services. The descriptions of these three approaches follows the same format as the preceding section, minus the case studies.

The Private Management Debate

Before presenting these profiles, a brief review of the debate over private management of public schools seems necessary. This is a decision that a school district must not make lightly; political controversy from community constituents and school employees is almost certain, and opponents of such approaches have some compelling arguments.

Positive views of private management emphasize the effective pairing of authority with accountability (Blackshear, 1993; Kearney and Arnold, 1994). As schools seek to make systemic changes, new managers who have not been groomed in the traditional system and who are given the freedom to try new approaches may make sweeping changes in the system as a whole that promote efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time, the risk of giving over educational responsibilities to a private company is minimized by strict standards of accountability: if the firm does a poor job, the contract can be terminated. Proponents of private management point out that the major flaw of public sector organizations is that there is no connection "between the performance of the organization and the continuing flow of resources to the organization. . . . Managers (principals and teachers) receive no rewards if the organization performs exceptionally well, and there are no sanctions if the organization does not meet its stated objectives" (Kearney and Arnold, 1994, pp. 112-113). By basing continuation of a contract on performance, privately-managed schools must do whatever it takes to succeed with students, and the process of determining the standards which must be met may also allow educational consumers (parents, students, and community members) a chance to voice their expectations.

Another role of "market-driven schooling" (a term that encompasses charter schools, private management of public schools, and school

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choice), it is argued, is to stimulate improvement among traditionally managed schools. The mere threat of alternatives to existing public schooling is expected to lead schools to seek to improve, and anecdotal evidence exists to support this view (Kolderie, 1993; Kearney and Arnold, 1994). In addition to these advantages, private companies generally promise to provide training for school staff and to bring resources and equipment into schools, including technology, which many schools could not otherwise afford.

Opposition to private management of public schools takes the form of both ideological and logistical issues. Opponents fear applying the tenets and goals of profit-making business to the public-service notion of schooling for all. Educated citizens are not a "product" like shoes, and learning is part of holistic, human growth, not an assembly process (Moffett, 1994; Tribus, 1993). Some opponents worry that stockholders' expectations will outweigh the learning of students, especially those with special (and more expensive) needs, and that efficiency for profit will take precedence over effectiveness (Clark, 1995). Moffett (1994) takes a hard line against privatization by pointing to many instances in which leading companies in private industry have broken laws or acted immorally with regards to their employees and/or customers. He argues that, as one stakeholder, local businesses should participate in school reform, but their motives for educational improvement are too narrow to allow them to guide or control school reform. Moffett (1994) also suggests that market-driven schooling calls into question the notion that all schools should be excellent. Losers may be acceptable and necessary in business but not in education. How far are we going to carry free enterprise in education? Will the schools that fail file for bankruptcy? What do you do with them? Imposing the rules of the private sector on the public sector destroys the point of the public sector, which is to act collectively for the benefit of all (p. 589).

Other writers have observed logistical problems with private management of public schools. For instance, private companies must be monitored by the local school board, but this will likely lead to conflicts between the two, confusion over who is in charge of policy making, uncertainty among employees about who they work for, and another layer of bureaucracy between classrooms and central offices (Clark, 1995). Another problem is related to financing. Private companies typically expect to receive the district's *average* per-pupil expenditure for each student enrolled in the privately managed school, but Harrington-Lueker (1993) points out that, currently, most contracts are for the management of elementary schools which usually receive less per pupil than secondary schools (which cost more) so that the contracting district actually spends more per elementary pupil than they might otherwise. In addition, Clark (1995) sensibly questions why taxpayers should not reap the benefit of more efficient, less expensive, school management (through lowered taxes) instead of private firms making profits.

As a further warning, Clark (1995) finds that a private company's track record with schools can be misleading if it has only worked with low-achieving schools that have shown improvement; it is much easier to achieve learning gains where the starting point is very low than to do so in a school that is already experiencing some success. Finally, the issue of accountability can be problematic as well. Meeting minimum standards for student learning may be all that is necessary for a company to keep its contract for school management, but educational excellence should be the primary goal. Even when the standards are challenging, however, a contract can only specify quality performance in terms of measurable outcomes, such as improvements in test scores, attendance, and graduation rates (Clark, 1995), but reliable, authentic assessment of student learning (not merely standardized tests) still eludes evaluators, and some educational purposes, such as improving students' self-esteem or preparing students for the workforce, are not easily measured.

Despite these worries, the possible benefits of (and the current political climate that supports) private management of public schools suggests that it will continue to expand its impact on school reform. It is too soon to know the long-term effects of private management on the achievement of students (ideological objections

aside), but if the few companies that are now taking on the challenge have success in a variety of settings and begin to make a profit, more companies will undoubtedly emerge. But, whatever the promises of this new approach to reform, Clark (1995) cites the excellent repair job done by private contractors on the Santa Monica freeway (after the recent earthquake) and the dismal performance by private construction companies on Denver's new airport to emphasize that no guarantees are attached to the idea of private management.

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Education Alternatives, Inc.

Introduction

Founded in 1986, Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI) is a private, for-profit company that forms public-private partnerships with public schools, manages private schools, provides consulting services to public and private schools, and sells proprietary products. EAI works in cooperation with three other service-providing companies: KPMG Peat Marwick which focuses on financial management; Johnson Controls-Facility Management which operates noninstructional services such as building maintenance and transportation; and Computer Curriculum Corporation which oversees the implementation of computer hardware and software. Together, these businesses make up The Alliance for Schools that Work which contracts with a school district to manage one or more of its schools. The Alliance will repair and maintain school buildings and grounds, introduce more efficient business and accounting practices, and provide training for teachers, computers for classrooms, and effective learning practices for students. According to an informational paper from EAI, "The Alliance's goal is to channel additional resources into the classroom through efficient operational and financial management of schools" (EAI, 1994, p. 2), but EAI also makes a profit by taking a portion of these savings as its fee.

The first two EAI schools were private schools, and the first public school with which this private firm worked as an educational consultant was South Pointe Elementary in Dade County, Florida. In 1992, EAI and its Alliance members—Computer Curriculum Corporation; Johnson Controls, Inc.; and KPMG Peat Marwick, LLP—began working with Baltimore City Public Schools. Under the terms of the contract, EAI helped to manage eight elementary and nine middle schools in Baltimore. The company currently provides services to 47 schools with enrollment of approximately 33,330 students, including the entire district of 32 schools in Hartford, Connecticut (EAI, 1995).

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Although EAI is most experienced with managing elementary schools, it is prepared to work with schools serving any age group and is now involved with middle schools in Baltimore and all schools in Hartford. The improvement of education for all students, regardless of background or special needs, is one goal of EAI.

"Instruction is expected to make use of methods that are proven to be effective, such as hands-on, intensive projects and cooperative learning, and students who need extra attention will receive tutoring and assistance tailored to their learning styles."

What happens at the school level?

When considering a partnership with EAI, many initial steps are taken not at the school level but at the central office, although a recent focus is on gaining "grassroots" support at the school level and with parents when the company is considering work with a district. Contract negotiations are made at the district level with the appropriate authorities, including the school board and teachers' unions, and public meetings are held to discuss the EAI option. A contract with a district can be terminated by either party at any time with ninety days' notice. So far, in the districts in which EAI is working, all teachers have been kept under their previous contracts, but other support personnel (such as custodial staff, bus drivers, and paraprofessionals) may encounter changes in their employment, including lower pay (Celis, 1993). If a whole district contracts for EAI's services (as in Hartford), EAI will update and refine central administrative management systems, accounting practices, information gathering and reporting, and other district-level administrative tasks. Also in Hartford, EAI was hired to help the district implement the strategic plan for improvement which has already been developed.

At the school level, EAI works cooperatively with each school's planning teams to choose educational practices which will fit with each school. EAI's instructional program, known as Tesseract, is currently being used in most EAI schools, but it is not a necessary component of the partnership. Teachers are provided extensive professional development and support to give them new skills for more effective instruction. State-of-the-art computers are made more widely available throughout the school and in each classroom so that students can learn certain skills at their own pace and teachers can electronically monitor students' progress (EAI, 1994). EAI also endeavors to involve parents more actively in school happenings and in their children's education; one way this is accomplished is through at least three parent-teacher conferences for every child each year.

How is instruction changed?

An important instructional change made in all EAI schools is the addition of a teacher-intern or associate teacher in each classroom so that the student-teacher ratio is cut in half. Such interns are college graduates, some pursuing a master's degree and others working toward teacher certification (Blackshear, 1993).

Part of EAI's services to schools is an optional model for instructional improvement called Tesseract. The Tesseract model combines a number of proven pedagogical practices and is based on the belief that "every student possesses special gifts and talents and that the job of education is to develop those gifts and talents to the fullest" (Alliance for Schools that Work, 1992, p. 2). The curriculum used in Tesseract is fairly standard—language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, music, and art—but the methods of instruction are innovative. Teachers become encouraging coaches for independent student-learners. Hands-on and cooperative learning are the norm, lessons take advantage of the surrounding community, and knowledge is connected to real-world issues. Each child's personal learning styles and education needs are identified and attended to, and students' social, emotional, and physical health, as well as academic learning, are given priority. A "Personal Education Plan" (TradeMark) is developed at the start of each school year with every student and his or her parents and teachers, and students are expected to meet "learner outcomes." Students are always encouraged to

be responsible for evaluating their progress and planning future work (EAI, 1994).

What improvements are expected?

Like other contract management approaches, EAI is held accountable for its performance. The local school board monitors results, and numerous public meetings each year allow the community to receive information and share their perceptions (Alliance for Schools that Work, 1992).

EAI has published some statistics regarding their management success in Baltimore and Dade County. Since beginning work with the Baltimore schools in 1992, student attendance rates have been on the rise, school environments are safer, parents are more involved, and students hold more positive attitudes about school and learning. At South Pointe Elementary, students in grades four to six scored higher in 1994 on standardized tests than similar students in the rest of Dade County (EAI, 1994).

Another interesting measure of EAI's success is its ability to save schools money compared to traditional management. Celis (1993) estimates that, at the start of EAI's second year in the Baltimore schools, approximately $5,400 of the average $5,918 spent per pupil in the district was reaching EAI classrooms directly compared to the $4,300 per student that reached classrooms in schools managed by the district. Administrative and maintenance cost savings account for the difference (Celis, 1993).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

EAI encountered much resistance when first proposed in Baltimore and Hartford, for the many reasons that for-profit management is opposed as a solution to the problems in public education (Judson, 1994; Kennelly, 1993). Although its track-record is praiseworthy, Kennelly (1993) points out that much of this praise comes from EAI's success at South Pointe Elementary whose situation was quite different from most schools that might consider contracting with a private firm. South Pointe was part of a district-wide expansion project, so its building was built from scratch and designed to specifically house this new form of education, unlike in Baltimore where EAI is being integrated into existing, traditional buildings. Also at South Pointe, IBM donated expensive computer hardware and a teaching staff was hired for the new elementary school from a pool of applicants from around the nation. Obviously, most schools that consider contracting with EAI will not have these uniquely favorable conditions.

Another problem has been noted by Kennelly (1993)—a teacher-turned-journalist who served for a short time as a teacher-intern in a Baltimore EAI school. He found that the role of the interns was unclear to school teachers, and interns were often used inappropriately. Says Kennelly, "Often sent into classrooms to work side by side with people hostile to everything they represent, the interns are the shock troop of the Tesseract experiment" (p. 33).

What resources are required?

Resources provided by the district will be decided through individual contracts with EAI. In Baltimore, EAI receives the average amount per pupil that is spent on other students in the district (Harrington-Lueker, 1993). Additional resources have been provided by EAI, such as the $1.3 million it invested in the Baltimore schools for building and grounds improvements (Celis, 1993). In Dade County, the work of EAI was supported through a variety of grants.

What assistance is available?

Once a contract is negotiated, EAI is responsible for the majority of operational and instructional changes that must be made, while it expects the district to monitor its progress and performance. EAI may also help districts procure grants for additional improvements, recommend individuals to fill vacant administrative positions, and assist in public relations activities.

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"As of last fall, ten states had passed legislation authorizing charter schools, and at least six more were considering it."

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The Edison Project

Introduction

The Edison Project is a plan for private, for-profit management of public schools according to a contract with a local school board and district administrators. The designers of the Edison Project have developed a comprehensive vision of changes in a school's curriculum, methods of teaching and leadership, and availability of resources including state-of-the-art technologies. They are committed to providing a high quality and ambitious education to all students at an affordable price, and they expect to be held accountable for results.

Originally conceived by advertising executive Chris Whittle (who created Channel One), the Edison design was developed by an experienced team of educational professionals. It included teachers, principals, and some prominent figures in education such as Chester Finn, social scientists, and management consultants and was based on educational research on effective practices and innovations around the world. After a few years of planning, fundraising, and scaling-back of ambitions, the Project is now prepared to enter into partnership with individual public schools, perhaps under a charter school agreement. The description of the Project provided below is based on plans made by the design team. The first Edison partnership schools opened in the Fall of 1995 in Michigan, Massachusetts, Kansas, and Texas.

Who/what is the target of improvement?

All students are given the necessary attention to meet high standards for learning. The Project is designed to be used in elementary, middle-grade, and high schools.

What happens at the school level?

One or more schools in a district will contract with The Edison Project; Edison staff will then operate the schools in conjunction with teachers and principals. The Project will initially invest private capital in the school in order to install technology, train teachers, bring in innovative curriculum materials, and renovate buildings

when necessary. Edison staff will manage the facilities and streamline administrative procedures such as record keeping and reporting. With a carefully structured plan of innovative strategies, significant improvements in the achievement of all students is expected, but the contract can be terminated on short notice if educators are not satisfied with student performance, parent involvement, and staff morale.

Edison schools will be organized into smaller "academies" that serve no more than 300 students; each academy deals with a specific age group of students, such as the "primary academy" for grades kindergarten through 2 or the "collegiate academy" for grades 11 and 12. Each academy will be divided into three "houses" taught by a team of teachers, and Edison expects its schools to have a low teacher/student ratio. By organizing around houses and teams rather than individual classes, teachers teach the same students for a number of years, and a variety of instructional settings are encouraged including small seminar groups, one-to-one tutoring, large lectures, and varied lengths for class periods. Students will progress within their academy at their own pace, rather than move one grade level per year, and will be expected to learn from older and younger students. Promotion from one academy to the next will depend on a student's demonstrated mastery of at least three-fourths of that academy's standards in each field of study.

Edison partner schools will provide a longer instructional day for all students and optional before- and after-school programs, and the school year will be lengthened to 210 days with an optional summer program.

Each teacher will have two hours of planning time per day, and teachers will be provided state-of-the-art technological support, including individually assigned portable computers and shared access to numerous telephones, copiers, and fax machines. Teachers will be included in key decision making about school practices, will be given control over spending on books and materials (which they can preview and order online), and will be enabled to write and publish their own materials for other partnership teachers and schools. They will be compensated at higher levels than other teachers in the district for the added responsibilities of teaching in an Edison school, and they will be able to progress within their profession from resident teacher to teacher to senior teacher to master teacher.

"Some opponents worry that charter school initiatives ignore the improvements being implemented in existing public schools through ongoing reform efforts."

Parents are expected to be closely involved with school activities through access to computer communication, voice-mail from teachers on homework and other information, regular reports from teachers on each child's progress, and at least four planning meetings with the teacher each year. A social worker will be available in the school to help families obtain needed social services. Involving the community is also important in an Edison school, and extended hours of school operation can make it a hub of community activity. Students are also expected to provide community service on a regular basis.

How is instruction changed?

The Edison Project holds high expectations for all students; it will eliminate all tracking practices in the school and expect students to meet a developed set of standards for each academy. Quarterly Learning Contracts, which students make with their teachers and parents, will keep track of each students' progress, and portfolios and performance assessments will be used in addition to the district's standardized tests. The curriculum, of which about 75 percent is designed by Edison staff and the rest is tailored to local needs by educators in the school, is organized around humanities and arts, mathematics and science, character and ethics, practical arts and skills, and health and physical fitness. Subjects across the curriculum will be integrated,

knowledge will be applied to workplace expectations, and instruction in music, art, dance, and drama will be maintained. According to the designers' ambitious goals, any student who begins the Edison program during their elementary years will complete a high-quality high school education by the end of tenth grade and go on to master at least six Advanced Placement courses during 11th and 12th grades.

Instruction is expected to make use of methods that are proven to be effective, such as hands-on, intensive projects and cooperative learning, and students who need extra attention will receive tutoring and assistance tailored to their learning styles. The needs of special education students and students for whom English is a second language will also be met in an Edison partner school through advanced instructional methods and innovative uses of technology.

Information technology is an important aspect of the Edison approach and will be integrated into instruction rather than seen as an occasional add-on. The designers expect, with time, to put a computer in the home of every family in the school as well as numerous computers in every classroom. The school will be fully networked to allow communication throughout the school and across the country. Instructional software will be available as well as less structured software that encourages writing, research, and data analysis.

What improvements are expected?

The contract that the Edison Project makes with a district will specify the results that will be expected over the short- and long-term. Edison designers expect that their plan will make significant improvements in student achievement; disappointment with student performance nationwide is the main reason the Edison Project was originally conceived. At this time, however, no data exists to back up the promises of the Project.

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

It is too soon to know what the problems may be with the Edison Project, but one can expect that many of the difficulties with any school reform initiative will beset this program, especially since it is bringing clearly defined expectations for change into already established school cultures. Also, there is no doubt that it will face political resistance due to the controversial nature of private management of public schools. The designers recognize this when they say that, "Public authorities must help The Edison Project clear the political and regulatory hurdles that might otherwise prevent partnership schools from acquiring the autonomy they need to succeed. But bold reform is never easy, and we are ready to work closely with you on matters of policy as well as education" (The Edison Project, 1994, p. 20).

What resources are required?

The Edison Project will charge the contracting district no more than the federal, state, and local dollars that are spent per pupil at other schools in the district. Say the designers, "We reallocate these funds to produce the results specified in the partnership agreement. Only if we accomplish our mission effectively over the long term do we earn a profit" (The Edison Project, 1994, p. 3). All training and other resource needs are provided by the Edison staff according to their contract with the school district.

What assistance is available?

Ongoing support and assistance is provided by Edison staff to help with planning, staff preparation, and the various steps of the change process. Six weeks of summer training will be provided for all teachers at the start of a new school partnership, and ongoing professional development will include mentoring from teachers at other partner schools and instruction that meets teachers' expressed needs. Electronic communication will allow teachers and Edison staff to stay in constant contact, and the designers expect to develop a nationwide network of partnership schools to allow schools to help each other.

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Charter Schools

Introduction

Charter schools are public schools that operate under a contract with the local school board and/or state which grants the school freedom from most rules and regulations in exchange for holding the school to certain standards of accountability. Teachers may apply to operate a charter school, but other organizations, such as colleges, museums, government agencies, or parents may propose a plan for an innovative school. The sponsor and the state monitor the progress and performance of a charter school, and renewal of the contract depends on the school's success in reaching stated outcomes during the contract period, which is usually from three to five years.

The use of charter schools in any district must be authorized by the state legislature, and such laws tend to limit the number of charter schools that can be opened in any one year. Funding for a charter school begins with a district's per-pupil expenditure times the number of students enrolled (a combination of local, state, and federal dollars) and usually also includes outside grants. Despite its autonomy, a charter school that receives federal funding must adhere to the requirements associated with use of such funds (Dianda and Corwin, 1994). Unlike district alternative schools, a charter school usually operates virtually independent of the sponsoring district and may become a discrete legal entity.

Charter schools can take many forms, from a brand new, start-from-scratch school in a downtown storefront to a change in status for an existing public school to a teacher-run school-within-a-school to a coordinating organization for home-schoolers. In the future, even city halls and local corporations may opt to open small charter schools in their buildings that allow apprenticeship opportunities for students (Sautter, 1993). Parents choose to enroll their children in a charter school and are usually responsible for their children's transportation to the school (Dianda and Corwin, 1994). Although state laws vary, private schools cannot usually seek charter status. Although private citizens and organizations can propose or help fund a charter school, and for-profit companies (such as EAI) may be involved in the management of a charter school, such schools "must adhere to legal codes that preserve their public character" (Dianda and Corwin, 1994, p. 2). Charter schools cannot charge tuition and must have an open admission policy.

Support for charter schools became widespread after the publication of Ray Budde's *Education by Charter: Restructuring School Districts* which discussed school-within-a-school charters organized by teachers (Budde, 1988; Dianda and Corwin, 1994). As of the fall of 1995, ten states had passed legislation authorizing charter schools, and at least six more were considering it. Both President Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley support charter public schools. The charter school idea is attractive to some because it offers a kind of middle point between traditional public schooling and school choice and voucher programs (Sautter, 1993).

In 1995 Georgia was the only state in the Southeast that allowed charter schools. In 1993, the state passed legislation authorizing an unlimited number of existing public schools to apply for charter status if the local school board, parents,

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and school staff approve. These schools would not be legally autonomous from their districts and would be expected to emphasize school improvement initiatives and improving student outcomes (Mulholland and Bierlein, 1993). As of the 1994-95 school year, no schools in Georgia had submitted proposals for charter status.

Who/what is the target of improvement?

Charter schools can vary widely in description, including what grade level of students they serve and what kind of learning problems they make a priority. For example, some charter schools have embraced the Montessori method, some have joined the Coalition of Essential Schools, and some have made use of charter status to promote home-schooling. Many charter schools endeavor to "more effectively reach out to educate students who have been underserved in the past" (Sautter, 1993, p. 16), and districts tend to look most favorably on charter school proposals that focus on populations of students which the traditional schools find hard to teach, such as potential drop-outs or students with disabilities (Harrington-Lueker, 1994; Sautter, 1993).

What happens at the school level?

Specifics about school-level change will vary with each charter school, but whether an existing public school is granted charter status or a new charter school is created, the typical processes of change will undoubtedly be involved. All the major constituents—the sponsor, parents, businesses, administrators, and especially teachers—will need to collaborate in making decisions about goals, management, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and myriad non-instructional details to get the school operating will need to be addressed.

Teachers are often the ones most likely to propose a charter school and seek a sponsor, but even if another group, such as a business or parent group organizes the school, teachers often must make up the majority of the school's board of directors or must sign a petition agreeing to convert their school to a charter school (Sautter, 1993). As with any school reform idea intended to improve student learning, teachers will clearly be the critical party in bringing the charter school's vision to life. They may also find that the opportunity is professionally stimulating: "For teachers, charter schools offer a chance to work in autonomous, innovative schools that utilize different philosophical approaches, educational programs, teaching methods, and assessment tools, and provide new professional development opportunities" (Mulholland and Bierlein, 1993, p. 4).

How is instruction changed?

Changes in instruction will obviously be dependent on the purpose and mission of the particular charter school, but charter schools are usually expected to be innovative in their approaches to teaching and learning and to develop strategies and practices that can be passed on to more traditional public schools (Sautter, 1993).

What improvements are expected?

Like the other approaches to school reform that are based on new management, charter school performance expectations are outlined when the contract is developed, and continued sponsorship may be dependent on the school meeting certain standards. In addition to improvements at the individual school, the concept of charters may induce certain kinds of improvements. For example, Dianda and Corwin (1994) found that parents are actively involved in many of California's charter schools, perhaps because they sense that they are partners in an educational experiment. Also, many charter school advocates argue that the mere existence of legislation which allows charter schools will spur districts to seek reform in order to avoid the possibility of charters (Bierlein and Mulholland, 1994).

Are there problems with or criticisms of this approach?

Charter schools pose political problems for sponsors and organizers. Teacher union leaders worry that charter schools, whose staff salaries and benefits need not be bound by previous contract agreements, may be used by a district to dismantle unions or save money through salary cuts (Harrington-Lueker, 1994; Sautter, 1993). A

survey of California charter schools in 1994 revealed that school districts resisted charter schools that sought independence and that relationships with teachers' unions were strained (Dianda and Corwin, 1994). Some proponents of charter schools argue that, to ensure effective autonomy, such schools should be sponsored by some organization other than the local school board, but this could cause problems since the district will often still be held legally and fiscally responsible for the school (Mulholland and Beirlein, 1993). Some opponents also worry that charter school experiments ignore the improvements being made in existing public schools through ongoing reform efforts. Sautter (1993) quotes Minnesota's Commissioner of Education, who addresses this concern: "Charter Schools are a small piece of the reform strategies we are using in Minnesota—not a cure-all. If charters divert our attention, and reformers believe that they don't have to devote as much energy to systemic change in the public schools, then they will not have served a good purpose" (p. 3).

Financing a charter school can also be tricky. For example, determining how to allocate federal funds from a district source for students in the charter school is quite difficult (Harrington-Lueker, 1994). As another challenge, the designers of a charter school may find that the funding received from a district does not cover the more costly educational programs needed to effectively teach students at risk, even though schools with this focus are more likely to be granted charters (Harrington-Lueker, 1994). Also, charter schools are often given full responsibility for all services and resources required for a school, in exchange for autonomy over their entire budget, but, often, many services such as student meals or payroll are better handled by the district than by an individual school (Mulholland and Bierlein, 1993).

Harrington-Lueker (1994) points out that some of the biggest hurdles for educators trying to start a charter school are the operational logistics, such as meeting building code requirements for the school site, buying insurance, developing pension plans, and so on. Most states and districts do not offer assistance in these matters to charter school organizers.

What resources are required?

Typically, a charter school receives the per-pupil expenditure that the district would normally provide a traditional public school. But, even if these funds cover the operating costs of a charter school, they probably will not be enough to meet the start-up costs of creating a new school (even in an existing public school building), so additional funding, such as foundation grants, may be needed.

What assistance is available?

Few states offer technical assistance to new charter schools on dealing with logistical issues and educational regulations. Districts who look favorably on the idea may provide help to local charter schools, but such arrangements would have to be decided between the local sponsors and creators.

For further information:

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Catalyst Ideas for Change

Although most of the preceding approaches to comprehensive change emphasize a particular organization and its vision and strategies, reform need not be linked to a specific program or organization but can grow out of a certain way of thinking about how schooling should be practiced. The following pages describe approaches to reform based on a broad theory, philosophy, or set of recommendations for school improvement which may act as a catalyst for comprehensive change. Such ideas are currently providing a framework to guide schools through the restructuring process. (The descriptions that follow do not lend themselves to being written in the same format as the previous profiles.)

Effective Schools

The concept of effective schools is probably not new to any educators today, but it continues to be a crucial foundation on which many school improvement plans and strategies are built. Effective school reform focuses on social and organizational changes, rather than technical changes, that create an environment for learning. Research on effective schools began in the 1970s, soon after James Coleman's report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, told the nation that schools—in comparison to social and home environment factors—had little effect on student achievement. In an effort to contradict these disparaging conclusions about American schools, Ronald Edmonds and other researchers conducted studies of schools in which students were mastering academic material and succeeding in school despite socioeconomic, family, and other factors that might predict otherwise (Lezotte, 1989; Smock, 1986). The many years of research that followed described such "effective schools" and then searched for common characteristics among them (Edmonds, 1978; Edmonds and Frederiksen, 1979; Good and Brophy, 1986). This literature is collectively referred to as the effective schools research.

Characteristics of Effective Schools

Effective schools are, in essence, schools of quality and equity (Lezotte, 1989). This means that most students (at least 90 percent) achieve minimum standards for learning and that this achievement does not vary according to socioeconomic status, race, or gender. Other definitions of effective schools include the expectation that student behavior problems are minimal and that students, teachers, and parents report satisfaction with the school as a whole.

As more has become known about what factors seem to account for an effective school, individual schools' and districts' improvement efforts have often focused on these factors. The following list describes the major characteristics that effective schools have in common, as compiled from a variety of sources (Follman, Vedros, and Curry, 1992; Lezotte, 1991, 1992; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990; Smock, 1986).

High expectations for success

All school staff hold and demonstrate a belief that all students can learn, and they employ strategies to ensure that students succeed. Teachers regularly tell students that they are capable learners, and high expectations are stated often throughout the school to create a climate in which students believe in themselves and feel

positive about their futures. Administrators also hold high expectations for instructional quality, and teachers expect much of themselves and their colleagues and believe that they are capable of positively impacting students' lives.

A focused mission and clear goals
Teaching and learning are the priority purposes of the school, and everyone in the school is committed to the mission of success for all. Specific goals for improvement developed by individual schools are clear to all members of the school community.

Instructional leadership
With the school's emphasis on teaching and learning, the principal views her or his role as primarily one of instructional leader and spends the majority of the work day in classrooms, facilitating instruction, rather than in the office. Such a leader holds teachers and students to high standards, protects learning from disruption and teachers from unnecessary paperwork, shares knowledge about education research and practice, regularly observes teachers and provides feedback, coordinates curriculum to meet local and state requirements and school improvement needs, analyzes and makes use of student achievement data, and holds frequent meetings to discuss student achievement and the instructional program. The principal also ensures that teachers get the professional development that they need and desire by providing time and resources for teachers to work together, visit other classrooms and schools, do their own research on effective practices, and organize or attend workshops. Instructional leadership is not only the responsibility of the principal, however; teachers in effective schools also work as co-leaders of school change, staff development, and instructional improvement.

Strive for improvement
School improvement is a constant endeavor in effective schools, and faculty continually work to improve their competence and effectiveness in the classroom. Professional development is a priority, and opportunities for staff development relate to schoolwide improvement plans and to teachers' expressed needs. Teacher collaboration is encouraged to allow teachers to address problems that cannot be solved in isolation from one another.

Safe and orderly environment
Effective schools have clear and consistent rules of conduct about which everyone is informed, and discipline is firm and fair. The school building and grounds are clean and safe, and classrooms are orderly and friendly places to learn. Teachers and students have positive personal interactions. School staff do not merely work to eliminate undesirable behavior but actively promote desirable behaviors by encouraging cooperative, multicultural, and democratic values.

Time and opportunity to learn
Efficient use of learning time is encouraged through clear and focused instruction, careful orientation of students to lessons, smooth classroom routines, and teachers who start classes quickly and have tasks and materials ready. Methods of instruction, including groupings of students, fit the skills and content being taught, and curricular modifications, such as interdisciplinary lessons and decreased content coverage, ensure that time is available for mastery of essentials. Teachers enable all students to master material by providing extra time or special instructional help to those who need it.

Frequent monitoring of student progress
Administrators and faculty assess student learning regularly and modify approaches so that all students can succeed. Various forms of assessment are used including standardized tests, teacher questioning, and portfolios. Learning outcomes data are disaggregated to clarify and address differences in achievement by gender, race, class, etc.

Rewards and recognition
Rewards and public acknowledgement of student achievements are common in effective schools. Standards for evaluation are made clear, and students are kept informed of their learning progress through timely feedback and praise. Rewards are given for various steps in a students' academic achievement and for other areas in which students can shine, such as for attendance, punctuality, community service, artistic

performances, and athletics. Teacher excellence is also publicly and informally recognized.

Positive home-school relations
Effective schools work to build trust and communication between the school and students' homes in order to encourage authentic partnerships between parents and teachers. Parents are invited to participate in all aspects of school operations, from classroom work to committees to social events, and the school actively works to create a welcoming environment for families and others in the community.

District-level support
Effective schools are usually supported by central office personnel and planning so that district services enhance individual schools' efforts. The district staff hold high expectations for the system as a whole and review policies to ensure that these are consistent with the priority of student learning. School improvement efforts are encouraged, supported, and monitored, and excellence is recognized and rewarded.

It is important to note that merely combining these characteristics, like ingredients in a recipe, will not ensure effectiveness. Instead, a school which focuses on creating an ethos of achievement and excellence around which norms, rituals, and practices develop, will find that the above factors become important places to focus reform efforts (Sashkin and Egermeier, 1994).

Becoming an Effective School

Schools that want to make use of the effective schools research and characteristics to undergird improvements need to begin with the recommendations for the school change process discussed in Section One of this document. Not all the characteristics can be addressed simultaneously, but schools can start by building leadership capacity and developing a school-wide attitude of high expectations. Familiarity with research on each of the above characteristics should precede decisions about school change, just as the Onward to Excellence model for improvement is based on effective schools research (see **Section II–Onward to Excellence**). Many of the other strategies for reform that are profiled in this document can be combined with a philosophy of effective schooling as schools develop their improvement plans. Throughout a school's reform process, surveys of parents, teachers, and students and open meetings to discuss what it means to be an effective school will allow staff to monitor progress toward overall improvement goals.

Effective Schools Products, Ltd.

This for-profit consulting, training, and publishing company, headed by Lawrence Lezotte, focuses all of its efforts on helping schools and districts around the country become and remain effective. Lezotte has been a key figure in the effective schools research movement since its inception, and the work of his company is well grounded in effective schools research and practice. Effective Schools Products provides video training programs, computer software, books, and articles to bring the best of what is known about effective schooling to schools involved in improvement efforts. The company also publishes eight issues per year of *Effective Schools Research Abstracts* which translate the latest research on effective practices into usable information for educators.

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Outcome-based Education

Outcome-based education (OBE) is a way of thinking about education in terms of results rather than processes and outcomes rather than inputs. Schools or districts which implement OBE develop broad outcomes for what students should know and be able to do and then base all other educational decisions on helping students meet those goals. Such outcomes may be applied as standards for graduation from high school (what William Spady, OBE's most prominent proponent, calls "exit outcomes"), or they may be created for various points in an educational career. In order to be widely used, outcomes must be broad in their vision but specific enough to be measurable (McNeir, 1993a). For example, the Aurora (Colorado) Public Schools described, through expected skills and knowledge, five characteristics for its graduates—collaborative workers, quality producers, self-directed learners, complex thinkers, and community contributors (Spady and Marshall, 1991). Like many of the other reform approaches profiled in this publication, OBE is based on basic beliefs about schooling: (a) all students can learn and succeed, (b) success breeds success, and (c) schools control the conditions of success (Spady and Marshall, 1991).

According to Spady (1994), outcomes are "demonstrations, or performances, which reflect three key things: (1) what the student knows, (2) what the student can actually do with what he or she knows, and (3) the student's confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration" (p. 17). Emphasizing outcomes requires a shift in thinking about curriculum so that desired changes in the learner, rather than the content of a textbook, drives decisions about what to teach (King and Evans, 1991). As Spady puts it, "It's not a matter of . . . what courses they [students] have taken. It's a matter of what they can do when they exit the system" (Brandt, 1992-93). Means of assessment are also affected by an OBE approach. Portfolios and other alternative, performance assessments are necessary to gain more accurate understandings of students' achievements, and criterion-referenced tests are

clearly more appropriate than norm-referenced tests. Spady has compared the demonstrations of student learning expected in OBE to the Coalition of Essential Schools' use of "exhibitions."

The basic concept of OBE is not new. Mastery Learning, a precursor to OBE, provides flexibility in time and instruction so that all students will eventually be able to master the material. Recent developments in curriculum and performance standards for each subject area are also related to the OBE approach. In this form, OBE is also connected to the accountability movement which promises autonomy through responsibility; once the ends have been set, the means can be varied by individual teachers and schools, as long as students are enabled to reach the outcomes (King and Evans, 1991; McNeir, 1993a). However, Spady warns that state policy tends to view outcomes as scores on tests of academic content rather than as demonstrations of higher-order competencies that prepare students for the challenges of life (including, but not limited to, employment and post-secondary education) (Brandt, 1992-93).

Outcome-based education has suffered criticism from those who fear that it sacrifices the teaching of basics in favor of values or that it focuses more on affective rather than academic goals (McNeir, 1993a; Simonds, 1994). Other criticisms include that the promised results of OBE are not based on systematic research, that success for all students will be achieved by lowering standards, and that alternative forms of assessment have not yet been developed enough to evaluate students' progress toward the outcomes (McNeir, 1993a; Spady, Marshall, and Rogers, 1994). Spady, et al. (1994) defend OBE against many of these criticisms, primarily by suggesting that many critics do not fully understand the philosophy or approach of OBE.

Implementing OBE

With its effects on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational goals, outcome-based education obviously has the potential to create systemic change in a school or district. Its effectiveness, however, will depend on commitment from all members of the school community. Thus, school staff, parents, businesses, government agencies, and other community representatives must be involved in developing the outcomes. Teachers, especially, must be key participants in defining what the outcomes mean and deciding how to revise curriculum and instruction. When they are included, teachers tend to view OBE favorably and find that OBE principles and practices fit with the way they think about their work (Glatthorn, 1993).

William Spady (1994) emphasizes four operational principles for any school trying to implement OBE:

- Clarity of focus on outcomes: Educators must have a clear, sustained focus on the culminating outcomes of student learning. Student success, rather than covering the curriculum, is the foundation for all decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Spady, 1994). Students should always be aware of the goals of their learning and the criteria that will be used to assess whether they have reached the goals (Spady, 1988).
- Expanded opportunity: Educators allow students many opportunities for continued improvement, including second chances on assignments and exams and the option of an "incomplete" grade in a course. Time is kept flexible so that students can proceed at varying paces.
- High expectations for learning success: Clear, challenging standards of performance are established, and students are held to them. Teachers compare each student's work to the set criteria and discourage competition among students.
- Design down: Curriculum and instruction planning starts where educators want students to end up—at the outcomes.

Schools will encounter many practical difficulties when implementing OBE, including the need for extensive curriculum development in order to design down from the outcomes, for professional development on how to make use of new forms of assessment, and for long-term efforts to build commitment and help various constituencies understand this new way of thinking about schooling (King and Evans, 1991). Despite the

difficulties, however, a number of school districts have successfully used OBE to foster comprehensive change. For example, in Pasco, Washington, educators started the change process with a vision for student success which included five exit outcomes. Staff in each school then examined their own knowledge and beliefs in relation to the vision and took action by organizing teacher training (over a three-year period) on using new instructional methods and theories, such as mastery learning and team teaching, to address the outcomes. A variety of school teams were then developed to oversee restructuring of various components of the school system to enable students to reach the outcomes, and results were monitored through participation in ongoing research projects (McNeir, 1993b).

A school or district can approach the implementation of OBE gradually. Spady and Marshall (1991) identified three progressively more sophisticated approaches:

Traditional OBE is common in schools, but it is not recommended by Spady, because, rather than designing down from outcomes, it starts with existing lessons and curricula from which educators determine what skills and information are truly important for students to learn well.

Transitional OBE, which is the best beginning for schools, is based on broadly-defined outcomes and emphasizes higher-level competencies such as critical thinking and effective communication, but it does not require changes in all aspects of the system, reform tends to stay focused on curriculum and assessment as educators get used to the idea of education based on ultimate goals.

Transformational OBE "takes nothing about schooling today as a given" and tries to honestly answer the question "Why do schools exist in this day and age?" (Spady and Marshall, 1991, p. 70). Spady suggests that all existing practices, including the school calendar, disciplinary and age-grade divisions, evaluation, promotions, and instruction can be radically altered to help prepare students for lives as competent adults after school.

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Total Quality Management

Many of today's educators are familiar with the phrase Total Quality Management (TQM), even if they are unfamiliar with TQM's tenets and application to schools. TQM grew out of the mind and experience of W. Edwards Deming, an American credited with much of the economic success in Japan since World War II, who has since guided corporate reform at Ford Motor Company and other American firms. The principles of TQM are now being modified to suit the reform needs of public schools, universities, and other human service agencies; schools and districts may find these concepts useful in instigating or directing restructuring efforts.

Embedded in much of the recent literature about school reform is the concept of site-based management. Until the advent of site-based decision making, many schools and districts had top-down, hierarchical management structures that had limitations given the importance of staff buy-in and commitment when school improvement is attempted. Recent changes in many states have given local school districts more flexibility and authority to affect public education. Consequently, it is critical that schools and districts equip themselves to handle the increased responsibility.

Management style can be examined in light of whether the focus is on delivering quality services to students (improving the learning process) or on higher outputs (test scores) with little discussion about the way in which students experience the work they do in schools. In the era of accountability, the most typical approach to managing school improvement has been management by results. The visibility and emphasis on state-mandated tests has increased dramatically (Bond, 1994).

Because of the power of state testing programs, schools often focus their improvement efforts solely on raising these scores. The weakness of this approach is that it often leads to short-term, superficial improvement efforts (e.g., improve students' test-taking skills) rather than in-depth analysis of the real strengths and weaknesses of the organizational processes and programs.

In *The Team Handbook for Educators,* Scholtes et al (1994) outline some of the problems of this focus on results (i.e., raising test scores):

- Looking good begins to take precedence over long-term organizational health. The pressure to raise test scores can demoralize both teachers and students who feel they are doing the best they can.
- Fear of failure and paralysis in regard to change can emerge. Faculty may become overly controlling in their relationships with students. They may be fearful of taking any chances or of trying anything new in the classroom for fear scores will go down further.
- The results emphasis leads to a focus on controlling or forcing learning rather than facilitating learning. Thus, students are seen as obstacles, rather than as partners. The needs of students and the community take a back seat to the need for higher test scores.

TQM: An Alternative to Managing by Results

Applying TQM to education suggests that student outcomes are improved by working on processes that impact the learning environment of the school. The purpose is to make teaching and learning processes meet or exceed the quality standards of the community, not making teaching and learning result in higher test scores regardless of the amount of real learning and motivation that occurs. The goal is to study and improve every aspect of the school system's

processes, not just add a program because it might improve test scores.

Although various authors treat TQM differently, there are some common themes which are described briefly below. The TQM themes are very consistent with themes from the Effective Schools literature.

1. A Primary Focus on Customer Satisfaction.

The idea of customer satisfaction as a driving force is central to quality management. A focus on actively working to examine and meet the needs of customers may be a novel idea for many schools and districts which have been organized around values of efficiency, standardization, and control rather than responsiveness. Although the concept of "customer" can mean different things to different people, one interpretation of external customers in an educational setting is clear to those who depend on the successfully educated student (business, higher education, and the community). In this definition, students and parents are partners with schools in developing students to the point that they satisfy external customers. Part of the process of creating a customer focus in a school or district might be to develop or improve relationships with business, higher education, and the community in general and begin dialogues with these external customers about the kind of skills needed by graduates.

In addition to external customers, it is helpful to think about internal customers, those persons who are next in line to receive your work. For example, each grade level is a customer of preceding grade levels. Thus, a goal might be to improve the communication between grade levels, departments, or feeder schools.

2. Constant Dedication to a Philosophy of Continuous Improvement.

In a SERVE report (1994) entitled *Overcoming Barriers to School Reform in the Southeast*, stop / start reform is identified as a barrier to effective school reform at the state level. As one teacher who participated in this study noted:

> The stop/start approach to reform really works against finding out what works and what doesn't. We throw out an effective old program in favor of an untested new one... Thus, 10 years after the reforms began, teachers and administrators are understandably "improvement weary" of abrupt shifts in policy initiatives. As one central office staff member put it, 'this too shall pass' mentality is too common.

The answer for start/stop reform is for a leader to commit to a continuous improvement philosophy. As problems are identified and reforms are attempted, these reforms should be evaluated and continuously refined, improved, or rethought. In this cyclical improvement process, teams learn to make decisions based on research and data, rather than just hunches, to look for root causes of problems rather than react to superficial symptoms, and to seek long-term, meaningful changes to the system rather than quick fixes.

3. Establishing the Process of Continuous Improvement (PDCA).

In TQM terms, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle is the workhorse of improvement efforts. While most people think of planning as something that takes place before a new process is initiated, a plan can be developed relative to an existing policy or program. Plans to change processes should reflect a belief that the change represents a more effective way of fulfilling the school/district mission. Customer needs and other data should be considered in developing plans.

Before the plan is activated (Do), some thought should be given to the kinds of information or data that will be collected to determine how well the plan is being implemented. This evaluation (Check) may reveal successful implementation, or more likely, implementation with some problems. A lack of data collection at implementation is why many educators feel at the mercy of the newest "fad."

Depending on the evaluated success of the monitored process, revisions might need to be made (Act). The process has come full circle and

is at the plan (Plan) stage again. Improvement of programs and processes is a never-ending cycle that should not be considered a burden, but part of the natural process of organizational improvement.

It should also be mentioned that as teams work through this cycle, TQM suggests using a variety of management tools such as flow charts, cause-effect diagrams, data tables, and check sheets (Scholtes et al, 1994) that help in focusing discussions and understanding the problem or initiative under study.

4. Understanding How the Parts of the System Fit Together.

One way of looking at what goes on in schools is that every activity is part of a larger process. The school is a dynamic system of interrelated processes (e.g., hiring, mentoring, evaluating new staff; providing professional development opportunities for tenured staff; developing the curriculum). Each process can be continuously improved.

Getting teachers and others talking about processes unites them in a common endeavor. Teaching a class is a system that involves many interrelated processes (e.g., setting goals, developing a lesson plan, developing assessments including questioning strategies). It is hard to change goals without also changing instructional methods and assessments. When a whole system is working well together, it might be called aligned and/or optimized.

It is also important to emphasize the word "total" in total quality. Quality is a criterion that can be applied to everything the organization does, so that striving for quality becomes a daily effort both in the classroom and out. It encompasses everything from holding quality team meetings to quality communications with parents to quality in terms of school cleanliness. Establishing a quality culture is gradual and happens in conversations, modeling, and being open and asking for feedback.

5. Effective Use of Teams and Employee Involvement.

While all individuals bear a responsibility to work on improvements, TQM recognizes the value of using a team approach to problem-solving. Gains in quality can result from the pooling of ideas, expertise, skills, knowledge, and approaches that teams bring to the table. A second outcome of a team approach is the support, understanding, and commitment that often results from teams working together.

Moving from a highly individualistic or competitive culture to a cooperative, team-oriented culture may not happen overnight. Staff need training and time to work together on projects. A key aspect of TQM implementation centers on providing teacher training and opportunities (time) to work cooperatively in teams on problems and improvements.

6. Quality Leadership.

"It has become more and more common to read and hear that the essential factor underlying effective schools is an "ethos" or "culture" of excellence, and that effective school leaders are culture builders" (Sashkin & Sashkin, 1993, pg. 100). Culture is often thought of as the values, goals, and meaning of the organization that its members share.

A frequent cause of failure in a TQM effort is uninvolved or indifferent administrators. Staff, acting on its own, cannot create a problem-solving, risk-taking, continuously improving culture. TQM encourages administrators to control and blame less, and support and facilitate more. They must constantly model sharing of power. A central office can "talk" TQM, but if in meetings they dictate rather than solicit input from principals, they aren't walking the talk. Similarly, if a principal is encouraging teachers to become facilitators of student learning in the classroom rather than authority figures, but in faculty meetings communicates by lecturing and laying down the law, then the principal is not walking the talk.

With TQM, it is the role of administration to maintain the focus on improving the quality of services, rather than on simply raising test

scores. An administrator who agrees to allow the science department try a new curriculum but warns that if state test scores go down, the new approach will be ditched, is not supporting quality improvement, but rather management by fear. In a TQM approach to leadership, administrators encourage creative thinking, risk-taking, work in self-directed teams, and a culture in which there is mutual support for everyone's continuous improvement.

7. An Improvement Versus "Gotcha" Culture for Students.

The six aspects of TQM described above demonstrate an approach to the organizational management of change, through problem-solving teams led by a supportive leader. TQM as applied in most organizations is an invitation to think differently about the management structures and the relationships between managers and staff. In education, it is also an invitation to think differently about the relationships between teachers and students. Are teachers' relationships with students characterized more by controlling, threatening, ranking, and punishing or by supporting, helping, and coaching?

As Bonstingl (1992, pg. 29) has put it:

> It baffles me that the process of learning in today's classrooms so infrequently includes reflection by teachers and students on the optimization of the learning they do together. The routine is always the same: Begin the unit, teach the unit, give the students a test, correct the test, return the test, review the "right" answers with the class, collect the tests, and record the grades. Then move on to the next unit. If we continue this practice, how will students learn to use experiences from past units to improve the work they do on future units? To help students engage in constant improvement, we must make the teacher-student learning system the focal point of instruction so that the way teachers and students interact in the learning process can be continually fine-tuned.

Ames and Ames, 1993, pg. 129 describe this culture:

> Our work suggests that there is a normative or ideal motivational state for the school learning environment. We call this environment mastery oriented. Whether student, teacher, or parent, when an individual is mastery oriented, he or she is focused on the process of learning as it relates to new skills and improving his or her own level of competence or skill. Underlying this mastery orientation is a belief that effort will lead to progress and learning. In a mastery-oriented environment, the emphasis is placed on working hard, taking on challenges, learning new things, and making progress. Value is placed on learning and it is understood that the pursuit of challenging goals involves making mistakes along the way. When mistakes or problems are encountered, problem-solving strategies are enacted and the goal-striving efforts are maintained.

How teachers manage the student management (discipline), learning, and assessment processes in their classrooms may be the most promising application for Total Quality Management. The TQM philosophy of continual improvement and employee involvement, when applied to students, should lead faculty to a real consideration of the consequences of their approaches to discipline, teaching, and assigning and grading student work. One must ask if faculty interactions with students in the classroom support a lifelong "yearning to learn" in students or lead to frustration and discouragement that precludes further learning.

AASA's Total Quality Network

The Total Quality Network, organized by the American Association of School Administrators, is a subscription service that helps educators translate quality management ideas into the processes and goals of school improvement. A newsletter-only subscription (at $96.00 a year) provides a bimonthly newsletter, *Quality Network News*, which summarizes the latest research in quality managment and links it to school practices, profiles schools that are using the quality

philosophy successfully, highlights upcoming relevant events and speakers around the nation, and recommends new books and materials on TQM. The full network subscription (at $235.00 a year) includes the newsletter, resource packets of articles and reports, a regularly-updated participant directory of others in the Total Quality Network, and three books published by AASA on total quality schooling. The Network also sponsors quality management seminars throughout the country.

The SERVE TQM Study

In 1992, to learn more about what TQM might have to offer schools, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) began a three-year research and development effort to support four schools and two school districts in the Southeast in exploring, adapting, and implementing Total Quality Management. The six "themes" of TQM are taken from a 1995 SERVE publication (Total Quality Management: Passing Fad or the Real Thing? An Implementation Study) which describes how the implementation unfolded at the six sites.

In addition to describing how the approach to implementation unfolded at each of the six sites, SERVE explored commonalities in understandings about TQM and perceptions of implementation and impact gained in focus groups conducted at the six sites.

Too often in education, decisions to try new programs are made without first examining whether the approach is a good fit with the current needs and resources of the school or district. In the last chapter, there is a discussion of issues involved in implementation that might help others in determining if TQM holds promise for their particular context, in planning for implementation, or in improving existing TQM efforts.

Several states have organizations (funded by corporate partners) which are taking leadership roles in providing support in the form of sponsorship, networking, publications and/or training for schools and districts interested in implementing TQM. Two of these programs are described below.

"Another necessary resource for student success is teachers who also seek to learn and grow in their work and a quality school that pays attention to the growth of all members of the organization."

The North Carolina Business Committee for Education is an organization of over 100 key businesses in North Carolina who share a common desire for the systemic improvement of the public schools. The organization is active in several areas (e.g., workforce preparedness planning) but of relevance here is its significant partnership and sponsorship of seven school systems and their business and university partners who have embarked on a journey toward quality in education.

This partnership/sponsorship effort was initiated in 1993 by the state's governor, Jim Hunt. The organization has an executive director who has become a point of contact for North Carolina Schools interested in TQM. Nearly one-third of the state's school systems contacted the director for information about TQM in 1996.

The organization believes that if the Quality Schools Program is to evolve as a local model for the improvement of public education in North Carolina, the organization will need to lead an effort to develop strategies for ongoing support and expansion. To date, the organization has raised more than $2.1 million in contributions, cash, and in-kind support for the implementation efforts of the seven pilot school districts.

Contact:
Tom Williams, Executive Director
North Carolina Business Committee
for Education
Office of the Governor
116 West Jones St.

Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
919-715-3535

In Alabama, the Alabama Power Foundation, Protective Life Corporation, Russell Corporation, and the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama are currently funding a program called Quality Education at Samford University's School of Education. As of January 1995, over 1,000 educators in 50 schools had been trained in Total Quality Management concepts by the Samford program. As stated in the program literature:

> Total Quality Education is an instrument of change, providing the mechanism to manage schools more effectively and to significantly increase student learning. Administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members will be trained to use quality improvement methods to identify and solve problems, use data to study processes, and continuously and rigorously improve every system.

Services offered by the program include three-day beginning training workshops for school teams, subsequent training for system facilitators, and networking conferences for participating schools. In subsequent years, the program will develop TQM training and support materials for dissemination.

Contact:
Maurice Pearsall
Quality Education Center
Samford University
Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education
800 Lakeshore Drive
Birmingham, AL 35229
205-870-2019

These efforts in North Carolina and Alabama represent significant partnerships of the business, university, and public education communities. These organizations are building grassroots support for a quality approach to education by offering leadership, resources and encouragement to schools and districts who choose to adopt a continuous improvement philosophy.

For more information:
Contact:
American Association of School Administrators
Total Quality Network
1801 N. Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209-9988
703-875-0764

The Center for Schools of Quality
John Jay Bonstingl, Director
P. O. Box 810
Columbia, MD 21044
410-997-7555
Fax: 410-997-2345

Bibliography:

Andrade, J. (1994). Habits keep us captive. *Quality Network News*, 4(6), 4. (From the Total Quality Network of the American Association of School Administrators.)

Bonstingl, J. J. (1992). The total quality classroom. *Educational Leadership*, 49(6), 66-70.

Bonstingl, J. J. (1994). The real business of education: Success for all. *Quality Progress*, 27(10), 47-49.

Deming, W. E. (1982). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

Glasser, W. (1990). *The quality school: managing students without coercion*. NewYork: Harper & Row.

Glasser, W. (1992). The quality school curriculum. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73(9), 690-694.

Leonard, J. F. (1991). Applying Deming's principles to our schools. *South Carolina Business, 11*, 82-87.

Lezotte, L. W. (1992). *Creating the total quality effective school*. Okemos, MI: Effective Schools Products, Ltd.

Rhodes, L. A (1994, April 6). Is there a standard for meeting standards? Why we need tools for our "journey." *Education Week*, pp. 33, 40.

Rogers, L. R., & Ahearn, C. E. (1993). What's your TQ IQ? In *Continual quality school improvement through total quality management and leadership*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Association of District School Superintendents.

Tribus, M. (1993). Quality management in education. *Journal for Quality and Participation, 16*(1), 12-21.

Valesky, T. C., Markus, F. W., Willis, J., Nelson, J. O. (1993, November). *Total quality management as a philosophical and organizational framework to achieve outcomes-based education and effective schools.* Paper presented at the meeting of the MidSouth Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Turning Points Recommendations

In 1989, the Carnegie Corporation Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents produced a document entitled *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century.* The recommendations provided in this publication now undergird much of the middle-grades school reform movement and can provide the impetus for any middle-grade school to initiate reform. The *Turning Points* recommendations focus on fostering both the academic and social development of adolescents and include the following:

- Create small communities for learning
- Teach a common core of knowledge using interdisciplinary teams and emphasizing critical thinking
- Ensure success for all students through cooperative learning, flexible scheduling, and the elimination of tracking practices
- Empower teachers and administrators at the school site to make shared decisions
- Staff schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents
- Promote physical and mental health of students
- Reengage families in the education of young adolescents
- Connect schools with communities through youth service opportunities and health and social service collaboration

Rising From the Middle

Many state- and national-level activities are in place to support middle school reform based on the *Turning Points* report. The most extensive support can be found in South Carolina where funds from the Carnegie Corporation's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative have resulted in a multi-faceted program known as Rising From the Middle. (South Carolina is the only state in the SERVE region to receive Carnegie funding for middle school reform.) State-level activities have included developing curriculum frameworks to ensure high standards in the middle grades, reforming teacher training and certification, coordinating health and educational services, organizing training and leadership development workshops, piloting reform ideas in demonstration schools, and reforming policies to support middle grades restructuring.

"Many state- and national-level activities are in place to support middle school reform based on the* Turning Points *report."

South Carolina middle schools are using heterogenous grouping, interdisciplinary instruction, alternative forms of assessment, career exploration, community service, advisor/advisee relationships between staff and students, human service interagency networking, teacher teams, and parent involvement to meet the educational and developmental needs of students. Although a state-level team works to combine ideas and resources to focus on middle school reform, plans for specific educational changes are made at the school level through shared decision making. State leaders have also organized partnerships between pairs of middle schools through "Project Advance." Six middle schools in South Carolina are designated as "Carnegie Lighthouse Schools" which are exploring innovative ways to integrate health services and instruction or to integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

For more information on Rising from the Middle:

Contact:
Ruth Earles
Middle Level Programs

South Carolina State Department of Education
1429 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803-734-8099

For more information on middle-grade reform in your state:

Contact:

The National Middle School Association
2600 Corporate Exchange Drive, Suite 370
Columbus, OH 43231
800-528-6672

Maria Garza-Lubeck
Council of Chief State School Officers
1 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
202-408-5505

Center for Early Adolescence
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill
Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-966-1148

Read:

Carnegie Corporation Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. (1989). *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century.* New York: Author. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 312 322.

Curriculum-Based Approaches to Change

The following pages describe a number of curriculum-based approaches to change that a school may consider using to help spur reform. Some focus on a specific subject area, such as math or reading, while others offer instructional methods that can be used to improve teaching in any subject. Some are for every grade level, and others are appropriate only for certain grades. The programs presented here were simply chosen through informal recommendations and are only a small handful of the wide variety of curricular reform approaches that are available to a school. Thus, the programs on the next few pages are not necessarily the best options for any one subject or grade level. For further recommendations along this line, see the National Diffusion Network's *Educational Programs that Work*, which is updated yearly (a full description of this publication is provided in Section III—Resources).

Compared to most of the approaches previously profiled in this document, which have focused on comprehensive reform, the curriculum changes discussed here are a bit more limited in scope. However, they have the potential to encourage schoolwide change through a number of avenues:

- Engaging in a curriculum reform strategy focuses staff on the needs of learners and the importance of efforts to become more effective in classrooms.
- Implementing a curricular reform successfully may provide staff with a "can-do" attitude that could carry over into more widespread school reforms.
- Encouraging the development of school teams to initiate or promote the approach; the work of such teams may lead to further reform efforts.
- Expecting that teachers in and across disciplines will develop collegial relations as a result of working with a particular reform and that these relations will be important for schoolwide change.
- Giving focus to professional development time and resources which may lead teachers to seek out further learning opportunities that they see as relevant to overall improvement.

Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions of Learning is a conceptual model that can be used to improve teaching and learning in any course or subject at any grade level. Developed by over ninety experienced educators, it offers five "dimensions" that describe how the mind works during learning and around which lessons and instructional methods can be organized to ensure that students use knowledge and complex reasoning as they learn new content. The five dimensions of learning are as follows (Marzano, 1992):

1. *Positive attitudes and perceptions about learning*
   Attitudes color learning experiences in positive or negative ways; effective teachers take this into account and design lessons that will foster positive attitudes and perceptions.

2. *Thinking involved in acquiring and integrating knowledge*
   Learners not only hear and absorb new information but use what they already know to understand a new idea and work with the idea to integrate it into their knowledge base.

3. *Thinking involved in extending and refining knowledge*
   Learners continue the learning process by challenging and extending new knowledge, comparing it to other ideas, and refining their understanding of it.

4. *Thinking involved in using knowledge meaningfully*
   Learners make use of new knowledge by working with it over a period of time and applying it to realistic or authentic issues.

5. *Productive habits of mind*
   Mental habits, such as being sensitive to feedback, seeking accuracy, and persisting even when solutions are not apparent, help to ensure that learning will be effective and efficient.

The dimensions 1 and 5 are clearly background factors that influence the processes in dimensions 2, 3, and 4. Teachers can emphasize different dimensions of learning in each lesson depending on how they design it. For example, a lesson which is organized around Dimension 2 will be suited to mastery of knowledge and skills, while a lesson focused on Dimension 4 might allow students autonomy in deciding how to explore and apply information. Assessment decisions can also be guided by the dimensions, and teachers are encouraged to emphasize Dimension 4—the meaningful use of knowledge—when designing assessments (Marzano, 1992). Preliminary results from a study on the use of the dimensions indicate that students' knowledge of content and ability in using a range of cognitive operations were increased (Marzano, Pickering, and Brandt, 1990).

In addition to the book, *A Different Kind of Classroom: Teaching with Dimensions of Learning* (see citation below), The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has published a *Dimensions of Learning Teacher's Manual* which guides teachers in unit planning and use of assessment based on the dimensions. Also available is a training package for staff development, a guide book on implementing this approach in a school, and a series of videotapes that discuss the model.

For more information:

Contact:

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-549-9110

References

Marzano, R. J. (1992). *A different kind of classroom: Teaching with Dimensions of Learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Brandt, R. S. (1990). Integrating instructional programs through dimensions of learning. *Educational Leadership, 47*(5), 17-24.

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QUILT

Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking

QUILT is a professional development program, developed by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), to help teachers of all subjects and grade levels learn to use effective questioning techniques to help students learn. The program views questioning as a "complex, dynamic process that is governed by teacher behavior at critical junctures" (AEL, 1995, p. 2). Teachers who use QUILT know how to prepare and present questions that stimulate student thinking, prompt and process students' responses with the whole class, and critique class discussions. Students are brought into the process by being informed of the particular questioning techniques that will be used and by learning to use effective questioning themselves.

QUILT's year-long professional development process was recently recognized by the National Diffusion Network as an exemplary training program. The training begins with a team of local educators who attend a national workshop. They then train their colleagues through a number of experiences: three days of introductory training, periodic forums throughout the school year to share experiences and practice together, partnerships of teachers within schools to provide support, and individual study and analysis during which teachers gather data and information to share at the forums (AEL, 1995).

For more information:
Contact:
School Governance and Administration Program
Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325
800-624-9120

For information on the QUILT program in Alabama:
Contact:
Kitty Elrod, Director
Montgomery Teacher Center
515 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
205-269-3776

References

Appalachia Educational Laboratory. (1995). *QUILT: A pattern, a process, a program, a paradigm* (Brochure). Charleston, WV: Author.

Whole Language

Most educators are familiar with the idea of whole language, although definitions vary. Myers (1993) describes whole language as a philosophy that emphasizes a holistic view of language. In practice, this means integrating reading, writing, listening, and speaking into the teaching of "whole language arts." Under this definition, then, whole language is appropriate for students at every grade level, despite the fact that most curriculum materials for whole language teaching have focused on the elementary years. Whole language programs tend to be literature-based (as opposed to basal readers, for example) and teach language by presenting the whole and then helping students master the parts. Myers recommends lessons which require students to use all of the language arts together, such as a cooperative group activity in which individuals write and then read each others' writing aloud (so that others listen), everyone discusses the writing, and then a presentation of the writing is made to the class. At the secondary school level, long-term projects that require students to work together, research and write, and present their projects also emphasize a whole language approach. Assessing whole language learning can be done through portfolios of students' work, student/teacher conferences involving writing or speaking, peer assessments of writing, class presentations, teacher

observations of group participation, and traditional comprehension tests.

Educators who are working to implement whole language practices can get support from the **Whole Language Umbrella**, a network and umbrella organization for various whole language groups in the United States and Canada. The Whole Language Umbrella encourages research on the study of whole language theory; publishes and disseminates information on whole language to teachers, administrators, and parents; promotes policies at the local, state/provincial, and federal level that support whole language learning and fights against policies that disempower teachers as decision makers; helps teachers find or start local support groups; disseminates information on local conferences; and puts teachers in touch with other teachers who have similar questions or concerns. The Whole Language Umbrella also holds an annual conference in the summer. Membership costs are $25 to $30 (U.S.).

For more information:

Contact:

Whole Language Umbrella Office
3024 Education Building
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405
812-856-8281

References

Myers, J. W. (1993). (Fastback #346). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Whole Language Umbrella. (1995). *Whole Language Umbrella: A confederation of whole language support groups and individuals* (Brochure). Bloomington, IN: Author.

High/Scope K-3 Curriculum

Developed as a follow-up to the High/Scope preschool curriculum, this program emphasizes developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children. Students are expected to plan, carry out, and reflect upon their learning activities, while teachers guide student choices, continually observe student activities, and gauge developmental levels and needs. Teachers organize a classroom environment that encourages active and cooperative learning and knowledge construction. Learning centers throughout the room provide learning activities in math, language, science, art, social studies, movement, and music, and small-group instructional workshops introduce concepts and skills in all subject areas. Teachers join student activities so that they can ask questions and extend children's thinking. Teacher training in the High/Scope methodology includes information on setting up classroom learning centers, integrating technology into classroom activities, leading small- and large-group learning experiences in all subject areas, observing and recording students' development, and managing students' work at learning centers (Schweinhart and Hohmann, 1992).

At-risk students in High/Scope classrooms have significantly higher standardized test scores overall, and on subtests of reading, language, math, science and social studies, than comparison students in traditional K-3 classrooms (National Diffusion Network, 1995). Also, teachers using the High/Scope K-3 curriculum report improvements in students' abilities to make decisions, take responsibility, solve problems, and engage in creative expression (Schweinhart and Hohmann, 1992).

For more information:

Contact:

A. Clay Shouse, Director
Development and Services
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
313-485-2000

References

National Diffusion Network. (1995). *Educational programs that work*. Washington, DC: Author, U. S. Department of Education.

Schweinhart, L. J., & Hohmann, C. (1992). The High/Scope K-3 curriculum: A new approach. *Principal, 71*(5), 16, 18-19.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a reading tutorial program for first-graders who are in the lowest 20 percent of their class in reading proficiency. Authentic assessments, such as a dictation test and tasks that reveal children's concepts about print, help determine a student's selection for the program. For these students, regular classroom instruction is supplemented with daily, 30-minute, one-to-one lessons with a specially trained teacher. This extra help continues for, on average, 12 to 20 weeks until the student "can read at or above the class average and can continue to learn without later remedial help" (Ohio State University [OSU], 1993, p. 1). In the tutoring, use of entire books or complete stories is emphasized over unconnected words or sentences; students, no matter what their proficiency, should be able to act like readers and writers (OSU, 1993). The Reading Recovery daily lessons follow a standard format developed after years of observational research of New Zealand students with reading difficulties. The components of a daily lesson are as follows:

- Student and teacher read many known stories.
- Student reads a story that was read once the day before.
- Student works with magnetic letters to extend knowledge of letters or words.
- Student writes a story.
- Student reassembles a cut-up sentence taken from the story s/he wrote.
- Student and teacher read a new book that will be read independently the next day (OSU, 1993; N. Jones, personal communication, June 12, 1993).

Teacher training for Reading Recovery integrates theory, practice, and collaboration with colleagues over a full year and is followed by continued collaboration, regional meetings, and site-visits from trainers. Local "teacher leaders," trained at regional training centers, become full-time Reading Recovery trainers for their colleagues while they teach children and maintain the program in a school district or group of districts (OSU, 1993).

A review of research on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery finds that, on average, 86 percent of students are discontinued from the program because they are at or above the grade-level expectancy (Hiebert, 1994). Use of Reading Recovery has also been shown to reduce the rate of retention in first grade and reduce special education placements (OSU, 1993).

For more information:

Contact the regional training center nearest you:

Georgia Reading Recovery Program
Georgia State University
120 Cortland Street, Room 400-B
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-651-1216

North Carolina Reading Recovery Program
Noel Jones
UNC Wilmington
Donald R. Watson School of Education
601 S. College Road
Wilmington, NC 28403-3297
910-395-3382

South Carolina Reading Recovery Program
Joe Yukish
Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Tillman Hall
Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29634
803-656-5103

References

Hiebert, E. H. (1994). Reading Recovery in the United States: What difference does it make to an age cohort? *Educational Researcher, 23*(9), 15-25.

Ohio State University. (1993). *Reading Recovery: The Executive Summary, 1984-1993*. Columbus: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 366 937)

National Writing Project

The National Writing Project concentrates on improving the teaching of writing—and, hence, students' writing abilities—through a comprehensive approach to professional development. Using a "teachers-teaching-teachers" model, this project brings successful writing teachers (from elementary schools to universities) together in five-week summer institutes to demonstrate successful practices to one another. The National Writing Project does not advocate a specific approach to teaching writing but believes that all students must learn to write well as part of basic literacy and that writing should be emphasized in all grades, from kindergarten through college. The Project also stresses that exemplary teachers of writing are themselves writers, and the summer institutes set aside time for teachers to write and then share their work in editing/response groups. Also in the institutes, teachers read, discuss, and write about key research in the field of writing instruction.

Follow-up staff development and continued contact with other writing teachers are important aspects of the National Writing Project professional development model. Teachers who have completed a summer institute and worked with other project staff on developing in-service presentations may become paid Teacher Consultants who organize a series of workshops for their school colleagues. These workshops also emphasize teachers-teaching-teachers successful practices, and those who participate in these workshops decide together on the agenda. Other follow-up opportunities include monthly meetings with one's summer group, ongoing editing/response sessions, planning of local and national conferences, and teacher research programs. The summer institutes, and many of these other activities, are sponsored and organized by a local university site that is networked with the National Project.

For more information:
Contact:
National Writing Project
University of California-Berkeley
615 University Hall, #1040
Berkeley, CA 94720-1040
510-643-9766

References

National Writing Project. (1995). *Model and program design*. Berkeley, CA: Author.

Pacesetter

This program, organized by the College Board, is an effort to implement the idea of high standards for separate subject areas into high school classrooms. Pacesetter provides course content outlines, assessment tools, and related professional development for the teaching of high school capstone courses. These courses are usually taught in the senior year, but have been taught in other grades, and are meant to expose *all* students to a challenging curriculum. Pacesetter courses include "embedded instructional assessments," such as complex problems to be solved, which allow students to reflect on their understandings of material and allow the teacher to gauge student learning and thinking, provide regular feedback, and modify future instruction. End-of-course assessments reflect the complete standards for the course and measure student learning through multiple-choice and free-response tests, and alternative forms of assessment (The College Board, 1992).

Pacesetter courses for English, mathematics, and Spanish are currently available and are based on standards developed by the relevant national subject-matter associations (e.g., the National Council of Teachers of English) who are working in cooperation with the College Board. Similar course recommendations are being developed for world history and science (The College Board, 1994). The College Board ensures that teachers are prepared to teach these courses through summer workshops, institutes, publica-

tions, on-line networking with course designers and teachers, and 800-number hotlines for each subject area.

For more information:
Contact:
Lola Greene, Manager
Pacesetter
The College Board
45 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10023-6992
212-713-8201

References

The College Board. (1994, Fall). *Pacesetter letter.* New York: Author.

The College Board. (1992). *Pacesetter: An integrated program of standards, teaching, and assessment* (Brochure). New York: Author.

Tech Prep

Tech Prep is not a specific program from one organization but a way of restructuring the high school educational tracks so that students have the option of focusing on both academics and technical career preparation. It can serve as a better substitute for both general and vocational tracks because it gives students a specific focus for their high school education without locking them into non-college-bound coursework. A Tech Prep student generally takes demanding vocational and academic courses during the last two years of high school and is prepared for enrollment in a community or technical college after graduation (students who plan to enter the work force immediately after high school are also well prepared) (Kadel, 1994).

High schools that offer a Tech Prep track usually coordinate their activities with a local two-year college in order to ensure that students are getting the courses they need for college application requirements. Such partnerships enable students to visit the college and, perhaps, take some classes there while still in high school and may also allow students to transfer basic college requirements from their high school transcripts so that they can enroll in advanced courses. In addition, this collaboration may encourage joint professional development opportunities among high school and college teachers (Kadel, 1994).

For more information on the Tech Prep idea:
Contact:
SREB-State Vocational Education Consortium
Gene Bottoms
Southern Regional Education Board
592 Tenth Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318-5790
404-875-9211

References

Kadel, S. (1994). *Reengineering high schools for student success.* Tallahassee, FL: Southeastern Regional Vision for Education.

Project 2061

Project 2061 is a comprehensive, national reform project for K-12 education. Headed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), this project seeks to bring science literacy—which includes the natural and social sciences, mathematics, technology, and engineering—to all American students, especially those who have been underserved in science courses in the past (e.g., females and minorities). With its focus on comprehensive change, Project 2061 attends to changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, teacher education, school organization, and educational policy and finance. It advocates instruction which is relevant to students' lives, rewards creativity and problem solving, encourages questioning, and builds on students' previous knowledge and experience. Cross-subject and cross-age planning and teaching are also recommended.

To date, Project 2061 has focused on developing standards of science literacy (published as

Science for All Americans) and suggested "benchmarks" of learning for grades 2, 5, 8, and 12 (published as *Benchmarks for Science Literacy*). Educators, scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and historians from across the country were involved in developing these publications and continue to work with AAAS as they develop recommendations for systemic reform as well as a database of resources and a multi-media computer system for curriculum planning. Proponents of Project 2061 emphasize that fundamental reform of this nature is long-term (taking at least a couple of decades), but educators are encouraged to get involved in this process by basing immediate curricular and instructional decisions on the project's literacy standards and developing local networks to pursue project goals in individual schools and districts. In addition to their books, AAAS publishes a quarterly newsletter—*2061 Today*—which highlights ongoing national and local efforts and provides advice to reformers.

For more information:

Contact:

James Oglesby, Dissemination Director
Project 2061
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1333 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-326-6666

To order the AAAS publication*, Science for All Americans *(1989) or* Benchmarks for Science Literacy *(1993), contact:

Oxford University Press
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
800-451-7556

References

The above description was compiled from informational materials (brochures and flyers) supplied by AAAS.

Connections, Challenges, and Choices: Florida's K-12 Social Studies Program of Study

Social Science 2000: Connections, Challenges, and Choices was created to respond to the need for new ways of thinking about and teaching social studies to students in Florida schools, but its recommendations are helpful for schools in other states as well. This program of curricular and instructional recommendations is built on a renewed emphasis on schools' responsibility to educate and hold high academic expectations. Constructivist teaching that values students' prior knowledge as they engage, collaboratively, with new materials and ideas is the basic instructional approach advocated. Students test theories, collect and interpret data, and connect social studies learning to their own experiences. The study of sociology, history, geography, economics, political science, ethics, and the humanities are primary aspects of the program, but art, architecture, music, dance, and literature are all used to teach concepts. Use of technology and learning simulations are encouraged. Assessment includes journal writing, oral presentations, role plays, and portfolios of student work.

Units are organized around six kinds of lessons: preassessment, investigation, confirmation, application, assessment, and extension. The curriculum design emphasizes these broad issues: interdependence of people and systems, change, culture, scarcity, conflict, perspective, and responsibility. The curricular and instructional recommendations for emphasis at each grade level are intended to foster a sequence that builds upon itself and results in a more complete social studies learning experience than is typical in schools today.

For more information

Contact:

Tom Dunthorn
Social Studies Program Specialist
Bureau of School Improvement and Instruction
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 444
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
904-488-6046

References

Florida Department of Education. (1991). *Connections, challenges, choices: Report of the Florida Commission on Social Studies Education*. Tallahassee: Author.

Project Scope, Sequence, and Coordination

Project Scope, Sequence, and Coordination (SS&C) is a secondary school (6-12) science reform project organized by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and based on a number of research-based principles about how meaningful science learning can best be accomplished in school. The term "scope" refers to the SS&C principle that a coherent, integrated science curriculum should span all six or seven years of secondary school. "Sequence" refers to several principles including (a) students should experience successively more abstract science concepts as they get older, (b) students should experience the natural world before learning the terms, symbols, and equations that scientists use to explain it, (c) fundamental science concepts should be explored over a period of years, not weeks, through repeated conceptual learning in various contexts, and (d) application of concepts should move from personally relevant issues for students to more global contexts and concerns. Finally, "coordination" refers to the practice of integrating biology, chemistry, Earth/space science, and physics into large curriculum units, so that all these aspects of science are experienced at every grade level. Other central aspects of SS&C instruction include the following:

- using hands-on learning experiences,
- not using ability tracking of students,
- integrating science and mathematical knowledge,
- pursuing a constructivist approach to learning that takes students' preconceptions about science into account and encourages students to propose and explore questions and ideas, and
- evaluating students' depth of understanding, not just their acquisition of information, through performance-based assessments (NSTA, 1993).

Teachers or schools which seek to reform their science curricula and instruction based on SS&C will need to ensure that teachers have access to the knowledge and skills in science subjects with which they may be less familiar and that teachers have time to collaborate with colleagues. To put SS&C principles into practice, teachers may consider developing integrated courses (such as a "Great Ideas" course or a "Science, Technology, and Society" course), discipline-based courses taught simultaneously by qualified teachers so that students attend one or two periods in each discipline each week, or discipline-based courses taught in a series so that students attend a different discipline course every quarter of the school year (NSTA, 1993).

The NSTA publishes a bimonthly SS&C newsletter called *Currents* and a book on curriculum design using SS&C called *The Content Core*.

For more information

Contact:

Erma Anderson
Program Manager, Project Scope, Sequence, and Coordination
National Science Teachers Association
1840 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201-3000
703-243-7100

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North Carolina's Project for Reform in Science Education, a middle school curriculum program, is based on SS&C. For more information, contact:
Dr. Helen Parke
East Carolina University
311 Flanagan Building
Greenville, NC 27858-4353
919-328-1607

For more information
Contact:
Another science curriculum reform project based on SS&C ideas is located at the University of Alabama. They offer a middle school science curriculum called Integrated Science. It provides teachers with materials, prerecorded telecasts, and on-line assistance, and is being implemented in schools in 15 states and one Canadian province.

Dr. Larry Rainey
University of Alabama
Center for Communication and Educational Technology
P. O. Box 870167
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0167
800-477-8151

References
National Science Teachers Association. (1993). *Scope, sequence, and coordination of secondary school science: Content core* (Volume I). Washington, DC: Author.

The Algebra Project

Begun in 1982 by Robert Moses, the Algebra Project asserts that all middle school students can learn algebra and be prepared to take college-preparatory mathematics courses in high school. It focuses on helping students make the transition (usually in sixth grade) between arithmetic and algebraic thinking and then learn algebra through a hands-on, exploratory process. Major mathematics concepts are introduced through the following five steps (The Algebra Project, 1995):

1. Students experience a physical event.
2. Students draw pictures and/or make graphic representations of the event.
3. Students discuss and write about the event in their own intuitive language.
4. Students engage in a process of regimenting or structuring the language they use to describe the event.
5. Students develop and use abstract symbolic representations of the event.

Through this process, "students . . . develop their own symbols for various operations, quantities, and mathematical objects. In this way they come to understand that standard mathematical symbols were created by people to represent physical events just as they have done. Only then are standard notations and symbols introduced" (Silva and Moses, 1990, p. 381). Teachers-as-facilitators are expected to change the learning environment so that students are supported in the social construction of mathematical concepts; inquiry-based teaching strategies and cooperative learning are common. In one school that has used the Algebra Project for some time, all students who were in the project have entered the college preparatory mathematics sequence in ninth grade, and many have enrolled in honors algebra or geometry courses.

The Algebra Project also carries with it a spirit of social empowerment. Moses was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, and he sees this project as a way to help children of color in rural and inner-city environments get out of poverty and into jobs through mathematical literacy (and the technological and scientific literacies that accompany this), the opportunity to attend college, and an enhanced self-esteem (Moses, Kamii, Swap, and Howard, 1989). Schools that want to implement the Algebra Project are expected to form a local policy group of parents, teachers, and community leaders who "understand the social and political implications of mathematics educa-

tion for their children and agree to take responsibility and ownership for implementing the project in their area." This emphasizes grassroots leadership toward empowerment. (The Algebra Project, 1995, p. 4).

The Algebra Project offers a full Transition Curriculum for use in the sixth grade and provides materials to supplement the school's regular algebra text for seventh and eighth grades. Schools or districts that want to contract for training and follow-up services must commit to involve all regular students and as many bilingual and special education students as possible and must have agreement to participate from all mathematics teachers in the middle schools that will implement it. There are a number of locations in the Southeast that are involved with the Algebra Project including seven counties in Mississippi and cities in Alabama and South Carolina.

For more information

Contact:

Robert P. Moses, Founder and President
The Algebra Project, Inc.
99 Bishop Allen Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-491-0200

David J. Dennis, Director
A. P. Southern Initiative c/o Positive Innovations
P. O. Box 20658
Jackson, MS 39289
601-969-3198

References

The Algebra Project. (1995). *A guide to Algebra Project products and services.* Cambridge, MA: Author.

Moses, R. P., Kamii, M., Swap, S. M., & Howard, J. (1989). The Algebra Project: Organizing in the spirit of Ella. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*(4), 423-443.

Silva, C. M., & Moses, R. P. (1990). The Algebra Project: Making middle school mathematics count. *Journal of Negro Education, 59*(3), 375-391.

The Hawaii Algebra Learning Project

The Curriculum Research and Development Group at the University of Hawaii has developed the Hawaii Algebra Learning Project (HALP) to promote problem solving and mathematical thinking in algebra courses. The instructional approaches advocated by this project are based on ten years of research and development and meet many of the learning standards advocated by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. When using this curriculum, students are introduced to algebraic concepts through a series of problem situations, and they are encouraged to construct their own methods to solve mathematical problems. Open-ended inquiry introduces students to the four phases of problem solving (understanding the problem, devising a plan, carrying out the plan, and looking back) and emphasizes the processes of reversibility, generalization, and flexibility for solving mathematical problems. HALP recognizes differences in students' levels of development and abstract thinking, and instruction in heterogeneous classes allows students time to develop concepts and skills. Students are expected to speak and write mathematics by discussing what they have observed and why they think their solutions are correct. Journal writing and group presentations of problem solutions are typical assessment procedures in a HALP classroom.

The Curriculum Research and Development Group has published a HALP textbook called *Algebra I: A Process Approach* which is being used by 16,000 students (in 8th through 12th grades) in twelve states. The project has also created a teacher's guide, transparency masters, and assessment tools. Any teacher who wants to use the text must attend a 45-hour training course (in the Southeast, classes have been held in Mississippi, Georgia, and North Carolina), and many teachers take the course who are not using the text.

For more information

Contact:

Annette Matsumoto
Hawaii Algebra Learning Project
Curriculum Research and Development Group
UHS3-227
1776 University Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96822
808-956-6216

Barbara Dougherty
University of Mississippi
School of Education, Room 137
University, MS 38677
601-232-7905
601-232-7906 (fax)

References

Rachin, S. L. (1992). Hawaii Algebra: A curriculum research and development model. In T. Cooper (Ed.), *From numeracy to algebra: The proceedings of the second mathematics teaching and learning conference* (pp. 34-49). Brisbane, Australia: QUT Centre for Mathematics and Science Education.

Interactive Mathematics Program

As an integrated, problem-based high school math curriculum, the Interactive Mathematics Program (IMP) is intended for both college- and non-college-bound students and meets many of the NCTM standards. IMP is organized into four- or eight-week units focused on a central problem. Students develop the skills to solve this problem as they work in groups and individually to solve smaller-scale problems. Students' written explanations and oral presentations of their analyses and solutions "help clarify their thinking and refine their ability to communicate mathematically" (IMP, 1994b, p. 2). The use of graphing calculators and computers is expected in IMP classrooms, and assessment tools include open-ended questions, student portfolios and presentations, student self-assessment, and exams. A selection of the topics taught in each year of high school include the following:

Year 1 — Using problem narratives from varied contexts such as the American West and Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum*, students learn problem-solving strategies and mathematical reasoning as they are introduced to such concepts as the use of variables, algebraic and graphical study of equations, statistics, and trigonometry.

Year 2 — Units using such concepts as chi-square, the Pythagorean theorem, and linear programming reinforce and extend learning from the first year. Students also work on developing mathematical writing skills, and problems include statistical comparison of populations and the geometry of the honeycomb.

Year 3 — Probability is learned through a hypothetical baseball championship, and, through other applications, students continue study of previous years' topics and learn new concepts such as derivatives and combinatorial coefficients.

Year 4 — Computer graphics, statistical sampling, and some physics are added to the learning of calculus concepts and the "world of functions" as students work on such problems as analyzing a high-dive circus act (IMP, 1994a).

The curriculum emphasizes involving all students in advanced mathematics study, especially women and minorities. Supplemental problems and activities for teaching a heterogenous classroom are included so that students who want to move ahead quickly and those who need more time to develop and synthesize concepts will have their needs met.

For more information

Contact:

Linda Witnov
IMP Outreach Coordinator
6400 Hollis Street, Suite 5
Emeryville, CA 94608
510-658-6400

References

IMP. (1994a). *A core high school mathematics curriculum: Four years of problem-based units from the interactive mathematics program.* Emeryville, CA: Author.

IMP. (1994b). *The interactive mathematics program: A model for mathematics reform* (Brochure). Emeryville, CA: Author.

Section III:

Additional Resources

The previous pages have included a great variety of organizations and publications that could provide more information or training on particular change strategies or programs. The following is a description of a number of other organizations and books or articles that might be helpful. These tend to be more general in their focus on school improvement. Also included here are names and phone numbers for staff in each SERVE state who can help individual schools or districts with their school improvement activities.

Organizations/ Programs

National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching
Teachers College, Columbia University
Box 110
New York, NY 10027
212-678-3434
Noted educators and educational researchers Linda Darling-Hammond and Ann Lieberman coordinate the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching. This membership organization brings together people and schools that are involved in the complicated process of restructuring and provides workshops, conferences, publications, and other forms of technical assistance.

Education Commission of the States
707 17th Street, Suite 2700
Denver, CO 80202-3427
303-299-3600
The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that promotes effective educational policy for states and the country as a whole. With special projects, publications, and regular meetings of cross-state networks and advisory groups, ECS studies challenging educational issues and helps leaders make informed decisions that will improve schooling and student learning. Current activities include the Re:Learning partnership with the Coalition of Essential Schools (see section II), helping colleges and universities meet certain needs of schools and the public, and work with such issues as cross-agency collaboration, school finance, business/school partnerships, and mathematics and science education.

South Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and School Leadership
143 Withers
Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC 29733
803-323-4772 / 800-768-2875
The South Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and School Leadership promotes statewide collaboration of public schools, higher education institutions, and businesses to support educational reform for the 21st century. The Center provides technical assistance, networking, and re-education of school staff to enable system-wide improvement in South Carolina's schools. Schools that work with the center develop restructuring teams that represent all school staff and practice participatory decision making. These schools are aided by the Center through on-site consultation, a research database, a telephone hot-line, and opportunities for professional development workshops. Training programs offered by the Center include "Defini-

tion of Restructuring," "Managing Change," and "Conflict Resolution." The Center also helps form partnerships among schools and nearby colleges or universities, works closely with the ECS representatives from South Carolina, assists the Turning Points middle-school reforms in the state, and actively promotes (through training and equipment provisions) the use of electronic mail in schools across the state.

Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools

University of Wisconsin
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706
608-263-7575

Funded by the U. S. Department of Education, the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools conducts research and development projects on organizational change and educational improvement. Studies focus on the experiences of students in school, the professional life of teachers, school leadership and governance, and coordinating human services for disadvantaged students and families.

Institute for Responsive Education

605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
617-353-3309

As a non-profit research and development organization, the Institute for Responsive Education focuses on reinventing American education through home-school-community collaboration. Its activities are based on the belief that students need to be prepared not only as future workers but as citizens, family members, and life-long learners. Some of the institute's current projects include the Responsive Schools Project which focuses on restructuring schools, strengthening communities, and coordinating human services for children and families; the League of Schools Reaching Out which is an international network of schools that are trying innovative ways to reach out to families and communities; and collaboration with Johns Hopkins' Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning. The Institute publishes a tri-quarterly magazine called *New Schools, New Communities*, a "tool kit" on creating family-school-community partnerships, and a number of books and monographs on school change and parent involvement.

SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium

SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, Inc.
P.O. Box 5406
Greensboro, NC 27435
800-487-7605

Established to help communities of learners use technology effectively, the SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIRTEC) is part of a national network of six consortia funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the consortia is "to help states, local educational agencies, teachers, school library and media personnel, administrators, and other education entities successfully integrate advanced technologies into kindergarten through 12th grade classrooms, library media centers, and other educational settings." Services of the SEIRTEC include technical assistance, policy development and planning, evaluation assistance, and guidance, a toll-free help line/referral service, and referrals to training assistance providers and consultants. SERVE and The SEIRTEC offer educational services to Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

The Southeastern Regional Safe Schools Institute

SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, Inc.
P.O. Box 5406
Greensboro, North Carolina 27435
800-545-7075
910-378-0011

The Southeastern Regional Safe Schools Institute (SeRSSI) assists schools and communities in developing strategies and plans for reducing disruptive behavior, crime, and violence on school properties and within the community at large. The SeRSSI provides Comprehensive Crisis Management planning and training, evaluation and assessment of Safe Schools projects, procedural review and evaluations, technical assistance in policy alignment, safety

and security audits, and grant writing/research assistance.

Southeastern Professional Development Institute

SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, Inc.
41 Marietta Street, NW, Suite 1000
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
404-577-7737

The Southeastern Professional Development Institute links research-based knowledge and strategies for school improvement to clients' individual needs and plans. It works to increase the capacity of states and local school districts to plan, implement, and evaluate professional development. Services include providing technical assistance, delivering professional development programs (including follow-up support, sponsoring an Academy for Staff Developer Training to prepare a regional pool of experts) designing programs and materials to client specifications, and grant-writing.

New American Schools Development Corporation

1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 2710
Arlington, VA 22209
703-908-9500

Concerned about America's economic future, a group of corporate and foundation leaders created the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) to fund the development and dissemination of innovative, comprehensive school designs. Nine design teams have been selected and funded, including one that has been discussed previously in this publication: Roots and Wings (see section II). The nine teams have spent the last two school years (1993-95) piloting their designs in various school environments and are now preparing for widespread dissemination. Before being introduced to other schools, these designs must have shown that they can be successfully implemented and that they significantly improve student performance. Recent news has suggested that NASDC, a private, non-profit group, is now negotiating with eleven more possible design teams.

Foxfire

P. O. Box 541
Mountain City, GA 30562
706-746-5828

Foxfire is a teaching approach, begun in the 1960s in Georgia, that emphasizes active student learning through community-based work. Students' previous experiences and current interests and concerns guide class decisions about educational projects, and the teacher acts as collaborator and guide. Peer teaching, small-group work, and reflection throughout learning experiences are central methods of the Foxfire approach. The Foxfire Teacher Outreach program has established teacher networks throughout the country to involve more teachers in using Foxfire. Introductory and advanced courses are offered at colleges, universities, and education agencies. A journal for teachers called *Hands On* is published quarterly and the *Foxfire News* describes Foxfire activities nationwide.

MDC's Alliance for Achievement

Carol Lincoln
MDC, Inc.
1717 Legion Road
P. O. Box 2226
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-968-4531

MDC, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to economic and workforce development in the South, has created the Alliance for Achievement Project to help middle-grade students (especially poor and minority students) prepare for and ultimately pursue postsecondary education. Alliance for Achievement encourages partnerships between middle schools and community colleges and offers training and assistance so that schools can provide students with improved educational experiences and career counseling and provide parents with clear information on postsecondary education options for their children's future. Alliance for Achievement is currently being piloted in Birmingham, Alabama; Gainesville, Florida; John's Island, South Carolina; Stone County, Mississippi; Wilmington, North Carolina; and Louisville, Kentucky.

Managing Productive Schools Training

Karolyn J. Snyder, Founder
13604 Waterfall Way
Tampa, FL 33624

Principals and other school managers can take advantage of the Managing Productive Schools Training program to enhance their management capacities as they improve their schools. During a series of workshops, each principal works on her/his own school's agenda as he or she discusses with others in small groups and practices organizational planning, development, and assessment. The training also emphasizes leadership that enables collaborative decision making in the school and that helps teachers identify and solve problems. A "school work culture profile" also helps managers diagnose school improvement needs. Trainers are currently available in districts throughout Florida.

CASE-IMS School Improvement Process

National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091-1537
703-860-0200

The Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments—Information Management System (CASE-IMS) is a computerized, outcomes-based system for managing the school improvement process. Developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, this system provides instruments for assessing the school environment, computer software for scoring response sheets and interpreting data, techniques for predicting the effects of alternative paths of action during the school improvement process, and suggested interventions for improving certain environmental variables.

IBM's Teaching and Learning with Computers

800-772-2227

For schools looking for technology to enhance instructional practices and curricula, IBM has developed a program called Teaching and Learning with Computers (TLC) that combines teacher training, innovative software, and instructional strategies. Problem solving, higher-order thinking skills, and cooperative learning are emphasized through TLC, rather than drill-and-practice remediation. Learning centers organized around personal computers focus on writing, library research, using manipulatives, and practicing specific course skills.

Bibliography

Block, J. H., Everson, S. T., & Guskey, T. R. (Eds.). (1995). *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders.* New York: Scholastic.

This hefty volume was recently published to provide schools with information on a variety of programs and approaches around which school improvement plans can be designed. For the most part, the originators of particular reform ideas wrote the chapters that describe their programs. The book includes descriptions of learning innovations such as cooperative learning and mastery learning, teaching innovations such as direct instruction and writing across the curriculum, and schooling innovations such as accelerated schools and outcome-based education. The editors advocate integration of innovations and provide some concluding chapters to help educators translate information into action.

Boyd, V. (1992). *School context: Bridge or barrier to change?* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

One of a series of books about school change from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, this publication summarizes research on how the context found in schools shapes school improvement efforts. The author discusses the ecology of the school (resources, facilities, and policies), the school culture (attitudes, beliefs, and cultural norms), and effective leadership within these contexts.

Conley, D. T. (1993). *Roadmap to restructuring: Policies, practices and the emerging visions of*

schooling. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
In this extensive review of literature on restructuring, Conley discusses in depth those areas of schooling that are most central to fundamental change: learning outcomes, curriculum, instruction, assessment, learning environment, technology, school-community relations, time, governance, teacher leadership, personnel, and working relationships. He also looks at the ways in which roles and responsibilities are changing for federal and state governments, school districts, principals, teachers, students, and parents. Conley concludes with a section on the process of restructuring that deals with such issues as culture and leadership, building a vision, and finding time to restructure.

Follman, J. M., Vedros, R. G., & Curry, B. (1992). *Comprehensive school improvement*. Tallahassee, FL: Southeastern Regional Vision for Education.
As part of SERVE's *Hot Topics: Usable Research* series, this document synthesizes research on effective schools and school improvement stages into an easy-to-use reference book for school reform. It includes suggestions on developing a school improvement team, conducting a needs assessment, and implementing improvement plans. An extensive resource section describes a variety of helpful organizations and books, and the appendix includes sample questions for a needs assessment.

Fullan, M. G., and Miles, M. B. (1992). Getting reform right: What works and what doesn't. *Phi Delta Kappan, 73*(10), 745-752.
In this quick but reflective piece based on the authors' extensive study of the change process, Fullan and Miles list seven basic reasons why reforms fail and seven lessons for success. The reasons include having faulty maps of change, failing to recognize the complexity of problems, letting impatience lead to superficial solutions, and mislabeling as "resistance" people's natural responses to the uncertainty of change. The lessons include understanding that change is learning and a journey, seeing problems as "friends," and approaching change systemically.

Fullan, M. G., with Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers College.
This book is the most comprehensive summary of what research has revealed about organizational reform and the change process in education. Fullan, a long-time researcher on educational reform, emphasizes that change is a meaning-making, relearning process for human individuals, not merely a technical process of reforming structural roles and teaching people new skills. He also discusses key issues in the implementation process, suggestions for coping with change, and effective means of professional development. Other chapters look at the effects of and expectations for change in the work of teachers, principals, students, district administrators, government agencies, and universities.

Hord, S. M. (1992). *Facilitative leadership: The imperative for change*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
Part of a series of books about school change from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, this book is based on comprehensive research on principals, superintendents, and other change agents. It discusses previous models for understanding the change process in schools and offers new insights on the responsibilities of successful change-facilitating leaders.

Hord, S. M., Rutherford, W. L., Huling-Austin, L., & Hall, G. E. (1987). *Taking charge of change*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
The authors of this book have been involved in longitudinal research on the implementation of innovations in schools, and they have developed a number of diagnostic tools to help with the change process. This slim book describes, with various charts and examples, tools for determining the "innovation configuration" (exact components of a proposed change), the "stages of concern" through which practitioners' worries about an inno-

vation can be understood, and the "levels of use" at which implementers are operating. It also offers concrete suggestions for facilitating change successfully.

Méndez-Morse, S. (1992). *Leadership characteristics that facilitate school change.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
One of a series of books about school change from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, this volume outlines the history of research on leadership and details the characteristics of leaders of change, including that they are proactive, risk-takers, and believe schools are for students' learning.

National Diffusion Network. (Yearly). *Educational programs that work.* Washington, DC: Author.
This annual publication is a catalog of some 200 educational approaches for elementary, secondary, and higher education that have been validated by the National Diffusion Network. As such, these approaches have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving students' academic learning. The book is $11.95 plus $3.00 for shipping costs from Sopris West Inc., 1140 Boston Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501, 303-651-2829.

Sashkin, M., & Egermeier, J. (1993). *School change models and processes: A review and synthesis of research and practice.* ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 351 757
This monograph describes three approaches to change—the rational-scientific that advocates disseminating innovative ideas; the political or top-down that proposes external mandates for change; and the cultural or bottom-up that encourages organizational and value changes in individual schools—and discusses change strategies with various starting points—fixing parts, fixing people, fixing schools, and fixing systems.

Appendix

Quick Perception Quiz

The first step toward comprehensive school improvement is deciding that it is necessary and that you would like to be involved in a plan for improvement. What needs to be improved? Do you already have an effective improvement plan? To answer these questions, take the quick quiz below. It would be interesting to have principals, teachers, parents and students try it as well–perhaps at a PTA or advisory committee meeting–and to compare the results using the graph provided on the following page. This quiz is based on research which defines effective schools.

The rating scale is as follows: 5–strongly agree; 4–agree; 3–undecided; 2–disagree; 1–strongly disagree; 0–not applicable. Circle the appropriate number.

1. **There is a collaboratively-written statement of goals and a vision for the school which is shared by administrators, teachers, students, and parents.**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
2. The school has conducted an assessment to determine needs and strengths.	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. **A detailed improvement plan has been developed based on assessed needs.**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
4. The principal is highly visible around the school.	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. **There is clear and effective instructional leadership from the principal.**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
6. Teachers believe students can master basic skills at each grade level.	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. **Low-achieving students are called upon as often as other students in the classroom.**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
8. Subject objectives are coordinated and monitored through all grades.	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. **Administrators, teachers, and parents participate in school planning and decision-making processes.**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
10. School coordination is not characterized by rigid control from the top down.	5	4	3	2	1	0

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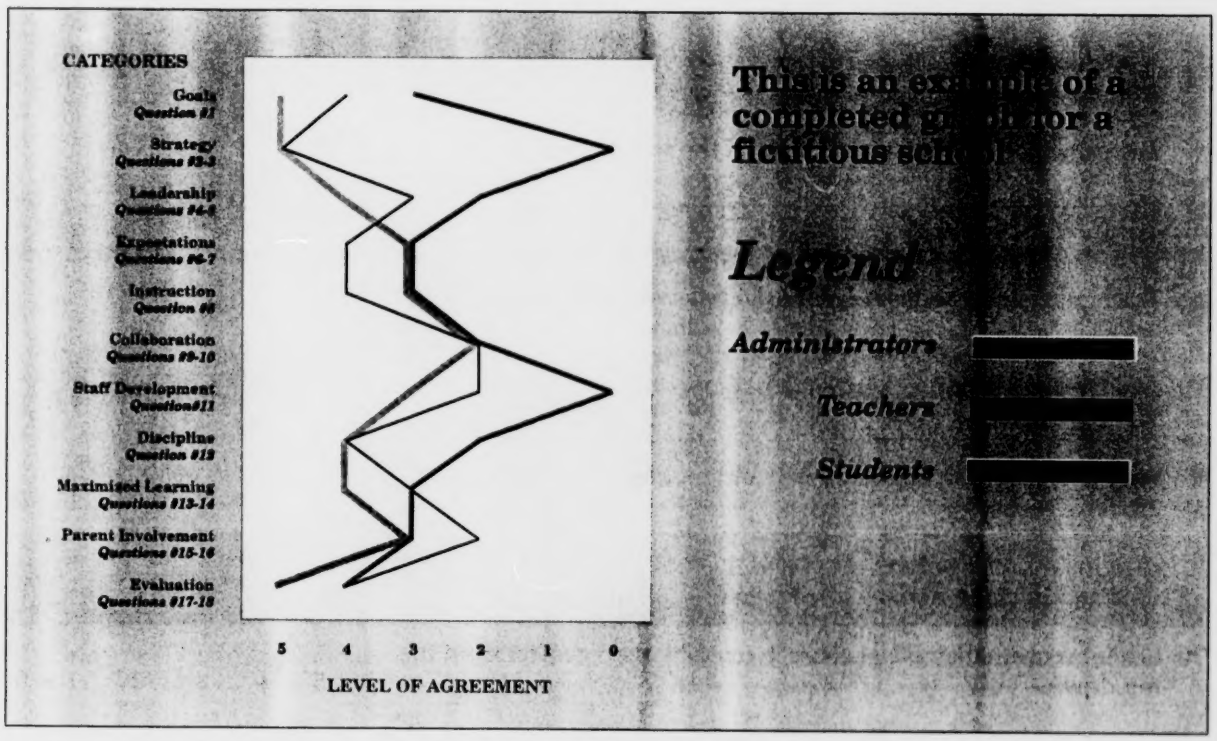
11. Staff development plans serve school-wide needs and are related directly to the school improvement plan.	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Generally, student discipline is not an issue at the school.	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Outside interruptions rarely interfere with instructional time.	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. Classroom time is focused on content and students are involved in active learning.	5	4	3	2	1	0
15. There is an active parent group in the school involving a majority of parents.	5	4	3	2	1	0
16. Ninety to 100 percent of parents attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences.	5	4	3	2	1	0
17. Assessments measure what students are expected to learn.	5	4	3	2	1	0
18. Assessment information is used regularly to improve curriculum and instruction.	5	4	3	2	1	0

Please mark the appropriate category:

❑ Administrator ❑ Parent/Community ❑ Teacher ❑ Student
❑ Advisory Committee Member



Quick Quiz Results Graph

After each group has completed the quiz, average the scores for each group by answer. Plot the average scores by group on the graph below. The questions have been divided into eleven catagories.

CATEGORIES

Goals
Question #1

Strategy
Questions #2-3

Leadership
Questions #4-5

Expectations
Questions #6-7

Instruction
Question #8

Collaboration
Questions #9-10

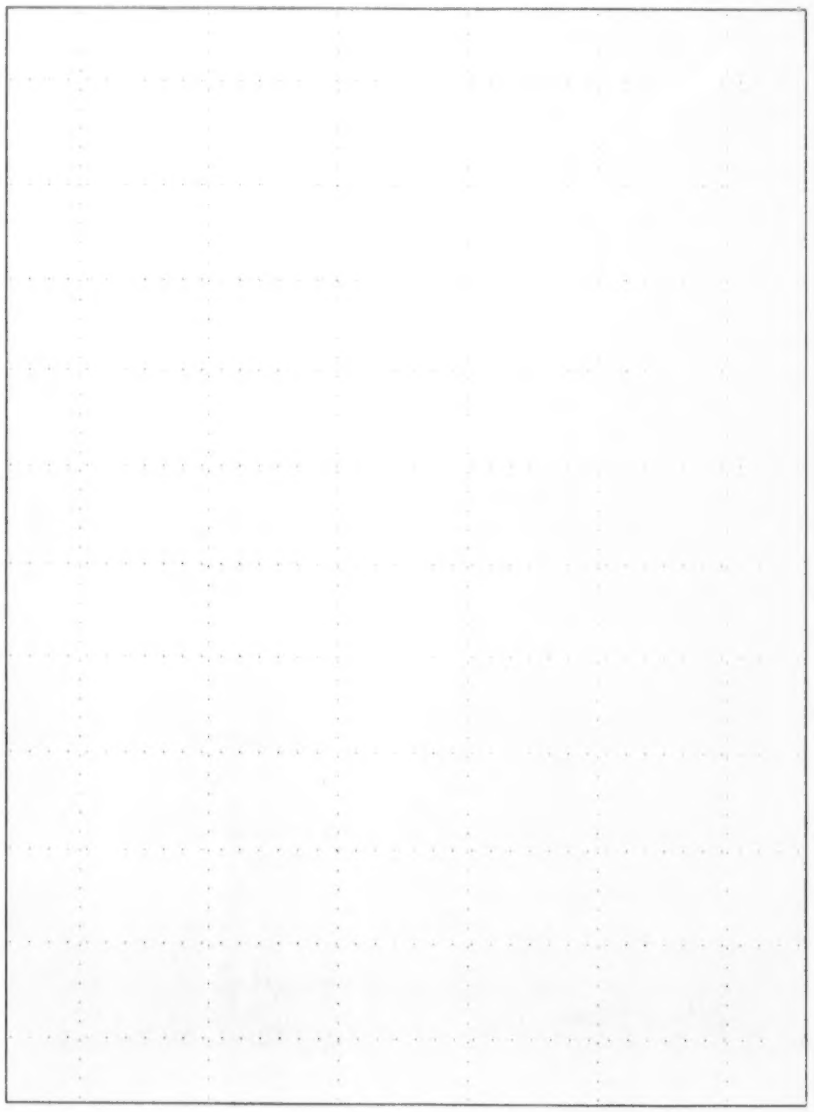
Staff Development
Question#11

Discipline
Question #12

Maximized Learning
Questions #13-14

Parent Involvement
Questions #15-16

Evaluation
Questions #17-18



5 4 3 2 1 0

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT

Sample Problem Statement

Kind of Problem
- Curricular
- More specifically, Language Arts
- More specifically, Lack of continuity in Language Arts

Who is Affected?
- All Students
- More specifically, Grades 1-6 (with coordination with Kindergarten)

How They are Affected
Students
- Repeating skills they have already learned (poor use of time)
- Tuning out
- Punctuation is poor (CAT scores)
- Not using skills they have "mastered;" transfer is poor (spelling, commas correct on test but later used incorrectly in sentences)

Teachers
- Frustrated by frequent changes
- Having difficulty integrating individual skills into a meaningful whole
- Do not know what materials and skills students have had and will have
- Assessment device requires a month to process; teachers do not know what specific skills to test the first month

Evidence
- Teacher observation
- School scores (CAT) are lower than other schools in the system in reading and language

Causes
- Wide variety of programs being used without any link
- Lack of teacher training in use of programs
- Communication between teachers is difficult

Goals for Improvement
- Sequential language arts program (integrating reading, spelling, listening, writing, speaking, handwriting, grammar)
- Record-keeping system that can track student progress from year to year and within a year
- Improved use of language arts skills in other content areas (skill transfer)
- Teachers know where to place students on the first day of school
- Provide enrichment activities for above-average students
- Improve teacher training to ensure best use of programs
- Prepare teachers to better handle individuals needs

Loucks-Horsley & Herbert, 1985.

Characteristics of Effective School Councils

(Note: The following text is reprinted with permission from School Improvement Councils: A Guide to Effectiveness. School Council Assistance Project, College of Education, University of South Carolina, 1989. Schools in South Carolina are required to have school improvement councils, and the School Council Assistance Project provides information, workshops, and technical assistance in support of these councils.)

Councils that work well share a common set of characteristics.

Representativeness

Since two-thirds of the council must be elected, the selection process should guarantee that council membership is truly representative. However, it may be necessary to recruit potential candidates from different segments of the community and propose them for election. Appointments by the principal should be made to balance the group in terms of race, sex, geography, and other variables so the SIC membership reflects the school and the community as a whole.

Creating task forces or ad hoc communities as part of the council structure is no way to involve more people in the work of the council and to ensure greater representation. Often, people are willing to volunteer their time to work on a specific issue if there is a definite timeable that includes a target date for concluding the committee's business.

Clear Sense of Purpose

Effective councils set yearly goals and objectives through the needs assessment process. Clearly stated objectives and task-oriented strategies give the council a sense of purpose and direction which guarantees a sense of fulfillment at the end of the school year.

Each council member must be aware of his or her responsibilities. Orientation of new members is vital, so also is training in effective schools research, which is used to develop the annual report.

Action-Oriented Meetings

Council meetings need to be guided by well-conceived agendas. Decisions must be made and plans of action developed and implemented. These actions will provide evidence to members and constituents that council meetings are worth their time and effort.

Ideally, a council will have 9 to 15 members. Research has found that this size group provides enough people to perform the SIC's required duties and functions without causing collaborative decision making to become unwieldy.

Research has also shown that effective councils tend to have chairpersons elected by council members rather than appointed by principals. These councils also meet regularly (a minimum of 9 to 12 times a year), since the complex process of assessing, planning, and monitoring cannot be accomplished without sufficient time.

Recognition of Council Members

Each council member should feel a personal sense of accomplishment and public recognition for his or her services. People need to know they are appreciated; by being appreciated they are more willing to give of their time.

Evaluation

In addition to evaluating its effectiveness in accomplishing the objectives and strategies contained in the School Improvement Plan, an effective council continually evaluates its own processes and procedures. Councils will continue to have action-oriented meetings when they take the time to periodically evaluate them.

The Role of the Principal Vis-A-Vis School Improvement Councils

(Note: The following text is also reprinted with permission from School Improvement Councils: A Guide to Effectiveness. School Council Assistance Project, College of Education, University of South Carolina, 1989.)

The 1984 South Carolina Education Improvement Act does not speak directly to the role of the principal vis-a-vis the School Improvement Council except to say that the council is to assist the principal. Self-confident and wise principals use their councils in as many ways as possible to support student achievement; these principals use their appointment powers to select knowledgeable and talented people to serve on their councils. Individuals selected are sometimes critics of the school and its programs, but the principals know that often the best way to turn critics into supporters is to involve them in decisions about the school.

Principals can help their councils be more effective by

- Providing them with full information about the school;
- Securing support services such as secretarial assistance;
- Acknowledging their importance by publicizing election winners and new appointees;
- Being aware that teachers, students, and parents may be uncomfortable in disagreeing with the principal in council meetings and helping to establish a group norm that disagreements are expected and even encouraged; and
- Being careful in exercising the position power that being principal confers on him or her so the group does not lose the independence it needs to come up with creative solutions to problems.

The Role of the School District Vis-A-Vis School Improvement Councils

(Note: The following text is also reprinted with permission from School Improvement Councils: A Guide to Effectiveness. School Council Assistance Project, College of Education, University of South Carolina, 1989.)

The district's superintendent and board of education play a key role in determining the effectiveness of their school improvement councils (SICs). For SICs to be effective, district staff and board members must

- Clearly define the role and purpose of the councils. This can be accomplished by creating district guidelines for SIC bylaws, by specifying the activities of councils, and by drawing up timelines within which activities must be accomplished.
- Demonstrate that they believe SICs are a valuable part of the operation of their schools; they can do this by having key administrators attend council meetings and by providing space, typing, copying, and related support for council activities.
- Acknowledge the effort council members put into their work. They can recognize council members through certificates of appreciation, by hosting luncheons or dinners for them, by publicizing their efforts and achievements in district newsletters, and/or writing news releases about them for local newspapers.
- Review the work of the SICs. Boards are required by law (in South Carolina) to review the annual School Improvement Reports prepared by their district councils and provide written appraisals to the councils. The district should follow up on all items that it can address and, when possible, implement the recommendations of the councils. When implementation is not possible, the council should be informed, in writing, why the district is unwilling or unable to take action.
- Provide councils with training and technical assistance. This may be done through district staff, by funding council members to attend conferences and workshops (travel expenses, registration fees, provision of a district van or car, etc.), and/or by drawing on the resources of the School Council Assistance Project.

THE ERIC REVIEW

Roadmap to Restructuring

by David T. Conley

(This article is an excerpt from *Roadmap to Restructuring: Policies, Practices and the Emerging Visions of Schooling* (1993) by David T. Conley. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. The excerpted article is available from ERIC Clearinghouse, 5207 University of Oregon, Eugene 97403-5207)

As noted throughout this issue, systemic reform involves comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated education change in key areas of teaching and learning. States, with input from educators and citizens, develop content and performance standards for core curriculum areas and provide local schools with flexibility and incentives to improve in these areas. States work from the "top down" by establishing policies and allocating resources; local schools work from the "bottom up" by planning and implementing improvements that are consistent with state policies, yet sensitive to local needs.

The changes in standards, curriculum frameworks and materials, professional development, and assessment advocated by such systemic reform experts as Marshall Smith and Jennifer O'Day are consistent with the central variables of school restructuring described in the following article. We include this excerpt from *Roadmap to Restructuring* to provide teachers, administrators, and community members with general insight into the implications of systemic reform on the local level.

What Is Restructuring?

Restructuring activities change fundamental assumptions, practices, and relationships, both within the organization and between the organization and the outside world, in ways that lead to improved and varied student learning outcomes for essentially all students. The important elements of this definition are the idea that fundamental assumptions must be challenged for change to occur and the emphasis on student learning as the key variable being addressed. *Learning* here refers to student learning outcomes as identified and defined by the state, district, or school site. The conception of learning contained in the terms *improved* and *varied* is different from that held today by many students, teachers, administrators, parents, and policymakers. It implies not just brief memorization of factual material, but the ability to retain, synthesize, and apply conceptually complex information in meaningful ways, particularly as such application demonstrates understanding of challenging content, intricate concepts and systems, sophisticated learning strategies, real-world problems, and natural phenomena. It also draws attention to the needs of *all* students attending school, not just those students who are currently succeeding.

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School Restructuring and Systemic Reform

Change has often meant a "project mentality," a steady stream of episodic innovations. These programs have tended to come and go without leaving much of a mark on schools. Fundamental change must involve all the main components of the system simultaneously and must focus on culture along with structure, policy, and regulations. Schools need to avoid *ad hoc* innovations and focus on a thoughtful combination of coordinated, integrated short-, mid-, and long-term strategies.

It is important to be aware of the important role that state government is likely to play in restructuring. While much of the literature on restructuring focuses on the school site and the school district, there is evidence that for restructuring to succeed, there must be consistent education policy that is initiated and coordinated at the state level. Smith and O'Day (1991) argue that "what is needed is neither a solely top-down nor bottom-up approach to reform, but a coherent *systemic* strategy that can combine the energy and professional involvement of the second wave of reforms with a new and challenging state structure to generalize the reforms to all schools within the state." They envision a more proactive role for the states in the process of restructuring—a role that "can set the conditions for change to take place not just in a small handful of schools or for a few children, but in the great majority" (pp. 234-235).

Smith and O'Day assert that states occupy both the logical and the appropriate position to support school-level change:

> . . . during the past 20 years, most states have gradually amassed greater authority and responsibility over their educational systems as their share of the educational budget has risen, as the economy and productivity of the state have been seen to be more and more dependent on its educational system, and as issues of equity and fairness in the distribution of resources and services among districts became an important part of the nation's agenda.
>
> . . . the states are in a unique position to provide coherent leadership, resources, and support to the reform efforts in the schools. States not only have the constitutional responsibility for education of our youth, but they are the only level of the system that can influence all parts of the K-12 system: the curriculum and curriculum materials, teacher training and licensure, assessment and accountability (pp. 245-246).

In the changing relationship among some states, school districts, and school sites, the state establishes standards and encourages innovation and experimentation. It creates accountability for the achievement of standards but allows schools considerable freedom to decide how best to meet the standards. Enhanced accountability through reporting of school-by-school performance is likely to cause schools to demand greater flexibility so that they can adapt their program to the unique needs of their constituency and achieve greater success.

Central Variables of Restructuring

Figure I presents a framework designed to make sense of the multitude of activities that schools call restructuring. Learner outcomes, curriculum, instruction, and assessment comprise the central variables of this framework. Changes in these areas are at the heart of teaching, what Elmore (1990) describes as the "core technology" of teaching. These dimensions include everything teachers do that relates to the instructional process: what they teach, how they teach it, and how it is measured and evaluated. These activities are, after all, supposedly the *raison d'elre* of public education.

As might be expected, change at this level is the most difficult to achieve. Examination of early restructuring strategies (Lewis, 1991; David and others, 1990; Lewis, 1989) reveals that they rarely reach these central variables. If it is possible to

bring about change in these areas, then it will be possible to say that education really is experiencing fundamental change.

When educators identify *learner outcomes*, they are determining what it is that students should be able to do as a result of the education they receive. Outcomes are statements that delineate behaviors, knowledge, and skills most valued in the learning process. They indicate the goals that students and teachers should pursue and provide a reference point against which student performance can be measured. Outcomes can be stated in terms of the existing curriculum, or they can be phrased in the broader, more integrated terms of attaining higher cognitive levels. Outcomes suggest a new relationship of teacher to learner and learner to learning; it is not enough simply to offer learning experiences if the learner cannot demonstrate the ability to apply the learning at some point in a meaningful way.

Changes in *curriculum* call into question what is worth knowing and how knowledge should best be organized. Much of the structure and content of the traditional curriculum is being closely reexamined, from the national level to the state and local levels. Many national subject-matter organizations and state departments of education are issuing new curriculum guidelines. Teachers are becoming more involved as curriculum developers. There are substantial changes occurring in the general education and vocational tracks of high schools. Even the traditional core curriculum for the college-bound is being reassessed.

The variable *instruction* includes all the strategies used to engage students in learning and the assumptions educators have regarding the relationship of the child to the learning experience. Instructional strategies are beginning to include the learner to a greater degree. Learners construct meaning from the experiences presented to them; not everyone learns the same thing from the same experience. There is a greater emphasis on developing the ability to think, reason, and solve problems, rather than simply memorizing information. Moreover, the unique needs of at-risk students are being considered to a greater degree as instruction is reconceptualized.

Figure 1.
Dimensions of Restructuring

Supporting Variables
Governance
Teacher Leadership
Personnel
Working Relationships

Enabling Variables
Learning Environment
Technology
School-Community Relationship
Time

Central Variables
Learner Outcomes
Curriculum
Instruction
Assessment/Evaluation

Assessment encompasses the strategies by which teacher and learner determine the results of the learning process. The goal of assessment is to ascertain the student's performance in relation to outcomes and to enable learners to take more control over their learning. The trend is toward holistic, integrated forms of assessment that serve the primary purpose of improving student performance and the secondary purpose (if at all) of passing a judgment on students or ranking them relative to one another. Assessment may be linked to outcomes, so that everyone knows what is expected of students in any given learning setting. By almost any measure, the range of methods and techniques for assessment is increasing tremendously beyond traditional paper-and-pencil tests.

The central values of learner outcomes, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are highly

interrelated. Teachers will not be able to restructure curriculum without the existence of standards and quality assessment strategies. Once standards and assessment strategies are identified and agreed upon, the changes that need to be made in the structure of the school and the content and organization of the curriculum and instructional program may become much clearer. To have any realistic opportunity to succeed, teachers will need to operate in a system that challenges them to enable all students to master complex content and to apply their knowledge to real problems and situations as a dimension of mastery.

Enabling Variables of Restructuring

The ability to bring about changes in the central variables often requires, or is aided by, alterations of other practices closely related to instruction. These variables, called the enabling variables, are *learning environment, technology, school-community relations,* and *time.* In many cases it appears that schools are limiting their focus to these enabling variables and hoping that changes here will ultimately lead to changes in the central variables. The assumption seems to be that if these structural dimensions within which learning occurs are altered, it will cause the methods and content of teaching to change as a result. While this may, in fact, occur at times, there is no guarantee that alterations in the structure and organization of the school automatically translate into changed behavior within classrooms by individual teachers.

The *learning environment* encompasses ways in which the relationship between learner and teacher is structured, such as the number of years an elementary teacher remains with a class of students, the grouping of students by ability or otherwise, the use of schools-within-schools, or the extension of learning beyond the four walls of the school. Teachers do not play a passive role in constructing the learning environment. They must make many decisions and take responsibility for creating the structure and content that allow students to engage in learning successfully.

Technology is considered as a separate dimension, since it can be used in any number of ways, some of which support restructured learning, others of which do not. Technology can enable restructuring to occur if it is used in ways that empower learners and enhance the quality and quantity of student learning. Technology is defined broadly to include many different forms of information devices. Some of these devices, such as computers and video equipment, are commonly associated with restructuring, but others, such as the telephone, are often overlooked.

School-community relations includes the role parents have as partners in the educational process, as well as the ways the broader community generally and the business community specifically can be involved in the education of young people. This dimension also encompasses the newly emerging collaborative relationships between schools and social service agencies.

The dimension *time* refers to altering the school schedule in some way, either in terms of the way time is allocated within the school day or in terms of the length of the school day or year. A variety of options and models have been proposed.

A great deal of energy is being devoted to programs focused on these variables. Programs in these dimensions can have the appearance of being significant changes without engendering the political opposition that changes in the central variables tend to arouse. In secondary schools in particular, changing the scheduling of time is especially popular, but it is not necessarily accompanied by the changes in classroom teaching that must occur for any new schedule to affect student learning. Elementary schools may favor the introduction of a computer lab to demonstrate that they are keeping up with the times. Closer examination may reveal that the lab is staffed by an aide and that teachers drop off their classes at the lab; because the technology has not penetrated the classroom, it has not had an impact on the central variables.

Supporting Variables of Restructuring

Supporting variables address organizational conditions of teaching and schooling. These variables are the furthest removed from classroom life in their immediate impact and are, paradoxically, being touted by some reformers as the prerequisites to any change in classroom behaviors. These variables include *governance, teacher leadership, personnel structures,* and *working relationships.*

All initiatives to decentralize decision making in schools fall under the category of *governance,* including site-based management, participatory management, school-based decision making, or any variations on this theme. Issues of choice in education are also included in this category, including choice within a school, choice among schools in a district, and choice between public and nonpublic education options.

Teachers want to be involved in decisions that they perceive as contributing to their ability to do their jobs more effectively. When teachers can be made to feel more in control of the conditions of their work environment, their sense of personal efficacy is enhanced (Fuller and others, 1982; Lanier and Sedlak, 1989; Rosenholtz, 1989). For most teachers, this sense of personal efficacy is a critically important contributor to the decisions they make and the behaviors they demonstrate. If teachers do not feel they can educate students successfully, they act one way; if they feel they can influence the conditions affecting success, they act another way.

The evolving sense of teacher professionalism has led to a proliferation of new programs of *teacher leadership.* Some of the new roles being created are familiar, such as the role of mentor teacher; others, such as site team leader or teacher researcher, are less familiar. Many schools are experimenting with roles for teachers such as teacher-as-reflective-practitioner, in-building staff developer, lead teacher, or team leader.

The way *personnel* are employed to staff schools is another dimension along which restructuring may occur. The current personnel structure has two categories: professional or certificated staff, such as administrators and teachers; and classified staff, such as instructional assistants, secretaries, custodians, and food service workers. Given a future that seems to indicate no major increases in funding for public education, it seems likely that public schools will need to consider reallocating existing resources as part of any attempt to restructure.

The dimension *working relationships* refers primarily to working relationships among teachers, administrators, and boards of education. True education improvement is much more difficult—some would say impossible—if teachers do not participate in and take ownership of its goals and processes. Teachers must be involved, their opinions respected, their power acknowledged. Changes in contracts can support change in classrooms and schools, but rarely cause it.

Education, like many other aspects of postindustrial society, has become too complex to be conducted successfully by isolated specialists. The future lies down the road of mutual interdependence, of teamwork among adults and children, of human capital development, of enhanced interpersonal skills, of inclusive leadership approaches and styles, and of organizations that resemble living organisms more than inert structures.

Getting Started

A fundamental question to be asked before restructuring activities begin is whether the school is ready to attempt such a challenging, arduous process. Many times a highly motivated leader or group of leaders within a school has pushed strongly for the school to restructure, in spite of the wishes of most staff and community members. The backlash in these cases can be so strong that it delays serious self-examination of a school's assumptions and practices for several years or more. Such a backlash can even eliminate the word and concept "restructuring" from the school's collective vocabulary. Discussing the

prerequisites to restructuring allows the faculty and community to explore the implications and to establish the ground rules before beginning the process itself.

The following statements are derived from research on the restructuring process specifically, and on change in organizations generally. They are designed to be presented to a faculty as a whole for consideration and adoption before any comprehensive program for school restructuring is initiated. A faculty would ask, "Do we commit to

- using data to make decisions?"
- creating and sustaining a culture of continued self-examination, extensive and continual professional development, and experimentation?"
- identifying deficiencies in the learning environment and accepting the challenge to help *all* learners succeed?"
- viewing children as human beings first, students second?"
- learning and employing a broad range of instructional methods and formats?"
- discarding what doesn't work or is no longer relevant?"
- viewing parents and community members as equal partners in the education of children?"
- creating opportunities for broad-based staff involvement in decision making clearly focused on change?"
- establishing a shared vision of education within the school?"
- helping adults who are threatened or challenged by changes occurring in the school?"
- In return do all adults in the school agree to be supportive or constructively critical (no obstructionists are allowed once decisions have been made openly)?"

Figure 2 provides examples of questions schools might ask, dimensions they should consider, and principles they might discuss as they begin to think about their vision of restructuring. It suggests areas where data might be collected regarding current practice, or where research on best available practice might be focused. Schools undertaking restructuring must be willing to create a sense of urgency for change, both among faculty and community.

The development of a vision helps people to understand why change is occurring and toward what ends. Community members should be involved in the process of vision building, and the vision should be communicated regularly to parents at meetings, through publications, and in face-to-face interchanges.

Teachers, administrators, and community members may look for models by visiting other schools and by investigating some representative visions of restructuring (see Education Reform Resource Organizations and Reading Lists starting on pages 18 and 22).

Restructured schools are likely to demand teachers with high skill levels, positive attitudes toward change, and the ability to work collaboratively.

Candidates hired for vacant positions should match the philosophy of the school in which they are to work, understand and believe in the vision, be committed to demonstrating both personal growth and flexibility, and understand that they may be asked to adapt their skills and roles frequently throughout their teaching career.

Almost no program of restructuring allots adequate amounts of time to the examination of deeply held, unquestioned beliefs; to the painstaking development of new teaching skills and materials; or to the creation of new networks and interaction patterns. Some districts and schools have attempted to create additional time through a variety of strategies, including:

- lengthening the school day by 5 to 10 minutes on 4 days to allow for early release of

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Figure 2: Key Questions To Frame Restructuring Efforts

Outcomes

- Are learner outcomes specified? Do they form the basis for assessment?
- Are outcomes consistent with the vision and goals of the school?
- Were outcomes developed with broad community involvement and with reference to the skills students need to succeed in the future?
- Are the outcomes a combination of intellectual processes, skills, and content knowledge that provide a clear framework within which assessment can occur?
- Are outcomes cumulative throughout a child's education— kindergarten through graduation? Are there benchmarks that suggest the acceptable range of performance at various ages?

Curriculum

- Is the content of all courses accurate and up to date?
- Does the curriculum prepare learners for the future or the past?
- Are facts and concepts balanced so that students integrate and apply information?
- Is the required course of study consistent with the school's vision?
- Do students have a role in determining what they learn?
- Do different social/ethnic/economic groups learn substantially different content?

Instruction

- Are students active participants in classroom activities and in choosing how they learn?
- Are individualized learner goals developed?
- Is factual information used as a tool to enhance concept development, rather than as an end in itself?
- Is information integrated across disciplines using systems concepts?
- Do real-world problems serve as a focus for instruction?
- Is instruction designed so that all students can succeed?
- Do members of different social/ethnic/economic groups work together cooperatively to solve problems and apply knowledge?

Assessment

- Is assessment an integral part of learning?
- Is assessment holistic and integrative?
- Does assessment include public demonstration?
- Are students involved in setting personal assessment goals and selecting assessment activities?
- Does assessment provide formative as well as summative data?
- Does assessment involve the application of information to solve real-world problems?
- Are a wide variety of assessment strategies employed?

Learning Environment

- Is the learner being placed at the center of the learning environment?
- Is the learning environment perceived as extending beyond the classroom? the school? the community?
- Are conceptions of grouping and organization being examined to determine their purpose and worth?
- Are personal relationships being stressed in the organization of the learning environment?
- Are curriculum, instruction, and assessment changes consistent with the learning environment?

Technology

- Is technology used both to transmit factual information in a structured manner and to empower learners to take control of their learning?
- Are teachers mastering technology?
- Is technology viewed broadly to include applications in addition to computers?
- Are there provisions for software and training when hardware is purchased?
- Are curriculum and instructional design changed in tandem with technology acquisitions?

School-Community Relations

- Are parents being included as partners in the establishment of goals for the learner?
- Are parents provided with enough information to participate as partners?
- Are the needs of parents considered in the organization of the school and in the expectations held for parents?
- Is the broader community invited to participate in specific ways?
- Is the community involved in and informed about changes in the school?

Time

- Is time being adapted to learning needs rather than vice versa?
- Is time structured to respond to needs and realities of students' and parents' lives?
- Are staff and curriculum development preceding and accompanying changes in time?
- Are the boundaries of time being reconceptualized?

Governance

- Is decision making participatory?
- Are decisions made in relation to a vision?
- Are existing decision-making structures modified and new structures added as necessary?
- Are changes in governance viewed as means to ends, not as ends in themselves?

Teacher Leadership

- Are new opportunities for teacher leadership being developed?
- Is training in leadership and group process provided when teachers need it?
- Are leadership opportunities offered to a wide range of teachers?

Personnel

- Is there an emphasis on excellence in the teaching staff, with no acceptance of mediocrity or tolerance of incompetence?
- Do the teachers want to be where they are? Are they excited about teaching and do they truly care about young people?
- Are people other than certified teachers becoming involved in teaching or in supporting the instructional process?
- Is the current distribution and allocation of staff within the school consistent with the school vision and mission?

Working Relationships

- Are there efforts to include the professional association as a partner in change?
- Is there exploration at the district level of alternative forms of bargaining?
- Is there agreement to leave much of the restructuring program out of the negotiated agreement, subject to specified guidelines?
- Are there good-faith efforts to redefine the role of the professional association in a positive way?
- Are a variety of strategies being implemented to create collaborative working relationships throughout the organization?

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students on one day, which will give teachers an additional 20 to 40 minutes to plan;

- starting school later in the day;
- establishing block scheduling;
- using summer vacation; and
- providing classroom release time for teachers involved in restructuring.

Ultimately restructuring comes down to the behaviors of individual teachers and principals in particular education settings. The success of restructuring depends on their willingness, along with the willingness of administrators, boards of education, state education agencies, legislatures, the federal government, and especially community members, parents, and students, to accept changes in the "deep structure" of schooling and in the goals of public education. There are many ways to get "there" from "here."

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Issues *about Change*

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Schools as Learning Communities

Learning community has become a popularly used term in educational literature, particularly with regard to school reform. The idea of a learning community is an adaptation of the concept of learning organizations, described by Senge (1990). Learning organizations are comprised of people who see themselves as connected to each other and the world, where creative thinking is nurtured, and ". . . where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 1990, p 3). Sergiovanni (1992) observed that "the idea of a school as a learning community suggests a kind of connectedness among members that resembles what is found in a family, a neighborhood, or some other closely knit group, where bonds tend to be familial or even sacred" (p. 47). A related concept, a "school-based professional community," was characterized by Kruse and Louis (1993) as one where teachers engage in reflective dialogue, where there is deprivatization of practice, collective focus on student learning, collaboration, and shared norms and values.

In an extensive review of the school reform literature focusing on school context, Boyd (1992a) identified indicators that facilitate change. Seventeen of these indicators (Boyd, 1992b) describe a school as a learning community, whose culture reduces isolation, increases staff capacity, provides a caring, productive environment, and promotes increased quality (Boyd & Hord, 1994). A learning community is a place where critical inquiry is practiced by collegial partners who share a common vision and engage in shared decision-making. This continuous critical inquiry provides a basis for seamless school improvement.

Leadership, however, is essential for the creation of a learning community, whose culture is shaped by an accumulation of hundreds of leaders' actions—no single one is seen as critical. In combination, however, they profoundly affect a school's context for change and improvement (Peterson, 1988). Beckhard and Pritchard (1992) cite this leadership and note that "a learning mode only occurs when an organization's top leaders understand the process, see learning as something to be valued, and are prepared to personally commit themselves to it" (p. 14). Through this kind of leadership provided by four principals, a learning community was created at John Dibert Elementary School.

A Crisis Opportunity

John Dibert Elementary School is located on the fringes of the downtown business and industrial area of a large, southern, urban city. This kindergarten through grade six school serving 400 students is surrounded by houses in need of refurbishing where a majority of the students

come from low-income families. The seventy-year old building is close to a large city park, and there is a community college not far away.

As had happened in many urban neighborhoods, the population of the school dwindled as families grew older and residents moved to the suburbs. In the early 70s, the school became highly bureaucratic and rigidly structured, and hierarchically dominated by its single administrator as the sole decisionmaker. Because of the ever-decreasing student population, the school board discussed closing the school, and this crisis stimulated significant action by a few tenacious parents who did not want to lose their school.

These parents developed a coalition of other interested parents who initiated dialogue with the board to keep the school open. As a result, a decision was made to maintain the school as an open-enrollment magnet school. With the new concept of magnet school came new administrators and the challenge to generate sufficient student enrollment to remain open. This paper is the story of that challenge, of the re-creation of the school, and of the principals who played a major role in the re-formulation of the school.

Regeneration: The Principal Factor

As noted, four principals contributed to the Dibert Difference, as it came to be known. They were Lucianne Carmichael, Clif St. Germain, Nancy Picard, and Wiley Ates.

Lucy's Legacy

Lucianne Carmichael favored a child-centered approach, and she suggested this idea to the parents who came seeking her advice. The changes at Dibert began with her idea that "a true child-centered approach is really a person-centered approach . . . because teachers can't honor children until they have been honored themselves." One part of this person-centered approach was giving staff the option of transferring to another school if they did not want to be part of the new program. Any new staff who came to the school to replace those who chose to leave were to be selected by Lucianne. This was quite unusual in 1975. In fact, Lucianne reports, "I'm sure I was the first principal that ever interviewed teachers [in the district]. It was a battle to achieve that, but [the district] agreed."

Originally, Lucianne lobbied for a summer-long training program for the teachers, but money was available for only one week. With some new materials and one week of training, they began to re-create the school. They ungraded classrooms and grouped children of several ages in family groupings. Carmichael articulated the philosophy underlying this arrangement. "Children learn by copying other children more than from any other source. We know that from raising our own children. . .In schools we don't use that because we think that children are going to learn (a) out of the book and (b) from the teacher. They learn from other kids and by doing it themselves."

Another part of Lucianne's philosophy was expressed in the continuous opportunities provided to children to develop and demonstrate artistic creativity. Whether through music, drama, dance, or the visual arts, children could share themselves and their richly divergent culture and backgrounds. This way, children were honored for their special differences that collectively contributed to Dibert, their "rainbow school." This was congruent with Lucianne's own experiences as an artist—a potter.

"Until thinking changes, nothing will change," Lucianne observed. "I spent a long, long time with teachers. My total investment of time or money or anything was always in the staff. Before I would buy any kind of equipment or spend money on the building, the money would first be spent on opportunities for the teachers or time for teachers, for all of us. I learned from the beginning that the most important resource that we had was the staff. No amount of money was too much to invest in them. "

Lucianne took several teachers to visit schools in England that were using the child-centered approach. "It's just like any kind of learning. To read about it falls short; if you go and experience something you can really know what it is we are talking about. I always felt it necessary, for myself and the other teachers, to get into other schools; to really go and see and experience and do. So every penny that I could get for teachers or for me to travel, I did."

"We have to feed ourselves, invest in ourselves, teach ourselves; we have to be the first learners. Unless the teachers are the primary learners in that building, the children don't learn much. Teachers have to have time to do that; they have to have support."

Time, thus, was another resource Lucianne provided for the staff and their development. Because the district did not provide any more paid time, the staff began to rethink the time that they already had available. They realized that time was "a very malleable resource." The staff decided to reallocate time by teaching longer on four days of the week and dismissing the children early on Thursdays. The time gained on that day was used for teachers to meet together, but never for "regular" faculty meetings. "The underlying idea was always it was for some kind of self-development process." Thus Faculty Study began on Thursdays. To that end, the teachers "were bombarded from the first, surrounded as much as possible with good reading and with good materials that we worked on together."

Through extensive interaction with teachers, Lucianne nurtured a shared vision. "I continuously wrote notes and letters to teachers. I went in classrooms; I would come out and write notes supporting every positive thing that I saw. In my job as principal, the teachers were my students in a sense, and I had to do with them everything that I wanted them to do with the students. I had to trust them, and honor them, and support them, and inspire them, and nurture them, and reinforce the good things that I saw them doing. When they began to experience that, I think they began to have more vision and ability to have things like that happening in their classrooms. When that starts in the teacher's mind, it doesn't end. It snowballs."

The entire school community—administrators, teachers, children, parents who dropped in—also met together daily at Morning Meeting. Each day in the school's basement, they shared school and classroom events, and honored children's accomplishments. A sense of family was strengthened through this daily interaction.

The Second Principal: Clif Potter's Torch

The faculty remembers Clif St. Germain as a twenty-seven year old guidance counselor who became assistant principal at Dibert, to become principal a bit later. Clif said of his mentor, Lucianne, "She was the spirit of the school and the embodiment of tenacity and focus on beauty." If she was the spirit, he was the heart, suggested the long-time Dibert teachers. His goal was to develop a happy place where children could learn, and where *Be Kind and Share* was the guiding principle in how everyone (administrators, teachers, students, support staff, parents) would interact personally and professionally with each other.

The faculty, as noted, had the option to stay at Dibert, now a magnet school, and sign on as part of the new school and its development, or to go elsewhere. As Clif reported, some people decided they didn't want to go, but they didn't want to stay either. Other issues that faced Clif and the faculty in the first year were too many kids in the classrooms, not enough books, no release time for faculty planning, too much rough kids' play, not enough consistency in discipline, and many others.

One of his strategies was to meet with the entire faculty at Faculty Study on Thursday afternoons and work on the problems they were having to deal with. His thinking was that if he could help

resolve some of the problems, then they would be more willing to share a new mind-set, to come with him to a new vision of schooling, to create a happy place where children learn. He believed that the first two or three years of energy would need to be used to build a vision that could be articulated in terms of culture, curriculum, and kids.

One of the symbols of the new Dibert was the rainbow that represented the multicultural dimension of the school's mission: to honor children of diverse backgrounds and cultures, and to value the contributions that diversity can bring. To make this idea quite clear, St. Germain and the faculty painted a rainbow on the front of the school. In addition, they posted a banner on which a large goose invited passing motorists on the school's busy boulevard to honk if they loved Dibert. For years, students reckoned that much of the traveling world loved Dibert. Other symbolic acts were cleaning up the dingy, unattractive school facility and putting flowers, music, poetry and song" into the walls."

Because Dibert was competing with private schools for students in the area, St. Germain went out into the community to talk with families and to tell them about the programs at Dibert and solicit their attendance. At the same time, he and the faculty were creating the programs and developing relationships to productively work with each other. Because the faculty was young and many staff had small children, they frequently would gather at someone's home with children for informal meals. Occasionally on Friday afternoons, Clif would suggest that they all get together and stop after school at one of the local restaurants for an end-of-the-week celebration. Afterschool volleyball games were also organized by Clif on an impromptu basis, where the staff could knock the ball around and play together, release tension, and go back to work the next day more relaxed.

One of his pieces of advice to others who wish to re-invent and found a school on new assumptions—on a new paradigm—is to trust that teachers know best about teaching and "when they bellow at you, know that they are coming from wanting to have a good school." Understand also, he cautioned, that time will always be problematic in any process and accept that. But, first of all, an administrator should know his or her administrative strengths, find out what gives the person energy, and never let that go. So that when things get rough or harried, "you go into that energy space to rejuvenate yourself. The principalship is a lonely place, so if you know yourself and who you are in terms of the school," you can stay whole and not "crash into the rocks."

Continuing into years four and five, the faculty and Clif met together weekly about how to operate the school and how to work with kids, so that "our being here is going to amount to something in the lives of these kids, and they are going to amount to something in our lives because they are going to teach us something." Believing that he had accomplished his purpose at Dibert, Clif felt it was time to leave, but not before he made sure that the new principal would take the school in a strong direction. Thus, he had coffee with Nancy to ask her, can you do this? She looked him straight in the eye and replied with a strong "yes!"

The Third Principal: Now It's Nancy

Nancy Picard's primary goal "was empowerment; I believed that it was the principal's job to empower teachers, students, and parents both as a means for creating a quality school and as an end in itself." This empowerment meant removing barriers and expanding what had been started under Lucianne and Clif. "I put something of an academic focus on and tried to model this at Morning Meeting. I felt like my job was to empower people around me."

To make teachers feel appreciated and valued, and to know that they were important, Nancy encouraged special events such as a parent-sponsored potluck lunch for teachers on the first day of school. "You'd hear kids say, 'We don't do that at Dibert.' I wanted teachers to say with

pride that, 'We do this at Dibert; I teach at Dibert'." New school T-shirts were created using a kindergartner's design and a kindergarten coffee was initiated where Pica would speak to different parent groups and invite them to the school for a tour given by Dibert parents. It was an effort at public relations, and "it gave the teachers a chance to show off." All these activities were directed toward the goal of increasing teachers' self-esteem.

Nancy's strategies included communicating to teachers that they had the power to set goals and that the school as a community would support them in accomplishing those goals. Nancy takes pride in the Arts Connection program as an example of the way a sense of empowerment developed among teachers at Dibert. Teachers were interested in writing a proposal to get a program to provide more opportunities for children in the visual arts. "The fact that teachers would work on their own to seek an arts grant and then plan and execute the program was a testament to the accomplishment of my personal goal at the school, which was not simply to establish an arts program but to establish an atmosphere and a mind-set that would encourage and enable others in the school to establish a program as well."

Another goal Nancy accomplished was that of removing administrative procedures that interrupted teachers' instructional activities. "My message to teachers was, you are professionals. I value you for your work with students. I don't want you to have to spend any more energy on other tasks than necessary'." Her efforts resulted in limiting non-instructional tasks required of teachers, and providing structures for shared decision making and teacher professional development.

During Nancy's tenure, parents contributed time and took responsibility for projects at the school, thus freeing teachers to teach. She involved parents in the process for lunch money collection. In this way, Nancy moved toward empowering parents as well as teachers. Improving the parents' bulletin also helped to involve parents. The monthly bulletin was upgraded with pictures and a logo, nicely printed and mailed out to parents, local businesses, and to community people monthly.

Encouraging the elimination of anything that detracted from teaching, Nancy takes some credit for streamlining the daily attendance report required by the district. She developed a weekly faculty bulletin to eliminate administrative items that took time in the faculty meeting. Included were celebrations and praises for children and teachers who were doing those kinds of things she liked to see happen, making sure that over time she mentioned something about each teacher. The bulletin reduced administrivia and highlighted activities she wanted to foster in the school.

Under Nancy's administration, a new report card was designed that was both administratively easy and reflected what the school was trying to do with the students. Nancy reviewed every child's report card and modeled the type of comments she felt teachers should include. She developed "a handout with suggested ways of communicating difficult messages to parents in a positive manner." The new report card eliminated duplication of record keeping by teachers and more "adequately reflected the skills that were being taught at each level." Teachers were highly involved with Nancy in the process through "many lengthy and loud discussions of curriculum, child development, grade levels, etc. We produced a new report card that reflected our curriculum, our expectations for our children and was easier to complete in the bargain."

Nancy surveyed parents to solicit their suggestions, comments, and concerns. This was done in concert with the school's management team she organized. The lower and upper grade chairpersons, special education chairperson, a union representative, two parents, a university professor, and a community person constituted the first team. The management team was designed as another way to reserve Faculty Study for teachers' professional development needs. The team represented the teachers and was a smaller body of people that would be more efficient in solicit-

ing information and making decisions about how the school would operate —decisions that their colleagues would support.

Nancy sought to empower students as well as teachers and parents. The Dibert student council conducted meetings where junior high principals from across the district came to inform Dibert parents and students about grades and other requirements of the various schools. "I wanted students to know they had a choice about what they could do with their lives, the direction they could take, the schools they could choose, etc."

The Fourth and Current Principal: Wiley's Way

"The three principals who preceded me had a real commitment to share decision making and move teachers toward ownership in what was going on in the school, so when I came it was clearly understood when I interviewed for the position that was the way business was done at Dibert." Thus, Wiley came with the attitude that he would maintain things and, if possible, bring new ideas into the school. He had a sincere appreciation for the management team that represented experience, knowledge, and leadership in the school. The team served as his colleagues as well as his guide in the transition period. If you are not intimidated by that, then you put your faith in people you work with, and you can become oriented very quickly and get a great deal accomplished, he noted.

A teachers' strike in the district led to considerable tension across the faculty, and it was resolved through "circle table" discussion that was beneficial to both Wiley and the faculty. They sat and leveled with each other about how they were feeling about the strike and their role in it. It was hard for everyone to deal with, but in so doing, they learned how to give Wiley and each other feedback in a group setting or individually. Wiley solicits feedback at times, but on some occasions the faculty lets him know they need to talk about some issues. At other times he pulls them together for a series of meetings to discuss things, where they are "very blunt and deal with emotional kinds of things where people have a hard time saying what they are really feeling . . . but we work our way through it."

This kind of catharsis is used regularly, sometimes with a facilitator. They believe they make the best progress when they sit down as a faculty with an agenda and lay their cards on the table, giving each other explanations about why and how things happen. They liken their process to that of a family where feelings get hurt and where concerns and animosities build up. They recognize the need for a vehicle to dissipate some of that through talking it out.

Another family aspect is that staff members address each other and Wiley by their first names. Typically in classrooms, they address each other as "Mr." or "Mrs.," but it's not unusual for first names to be used in the presence of children.

To set the family tone, Morning Meeting is used to start the day together. This special daily time with all children, staff, and numbers of parents who attend, is used for sharing and for honoring students. The children have learned how to focus and to listen as their peers contribute to the meeting. These contributions could be a child reading a poem he or she has written; first graders reading a bit from the first primer they have completed; reports about field trips that have been taken; presentations of projects underway or finished; or a demonstration of peer mediation from fifth or sixth graders who use their skills to ameliorate problems on the play yard. Wiley conducts this meeting, but it is really the children who are the participants.

Wiley's area of specialization and professional preparation is in curriculum. The teachers report that he has brought an emphasis on the use of technology as an instructional tool and a focus on curriculum. His tenure as middle school assistant principal shaped his concerns that students be ready to matriculate from the elementary to middle school. With Wiley, the

faculty examines their California Achievement Test data to identify areas of non-mastery and partial mastery. Their goal is to move all kids up, with particular attention to students in the bottom quartile—with whom they have had good success in moving into the second quartile.

One of the goals that Wiley and the faculty set for the new school year was to explore and adopt a curriculum to which they could all subscribe. They had been thinking for quite a long time about the need for a consistent curriculum so that every child received an adequate and appropriate set of learning opportunities. Further, they wanted a curriculum that would foster their vision of multiculturalism, since the school had always been diverse, the rainbow school, and they wanted to perpetuate that.

From attendance at a national conference, one of the teachers brought information about a curriculum for exploration. Wiley and this key teacher planned how to share information and support the staff in their curriculum decision-making process. An initial activity, led by Wiley, was to revisit the school's mission and reiterate its operating principles, and then to look at the curriculum in light of the vision that the faculty shared for the school. They did a force-field analysis of the benefits and disadvantages of the curriculum in relationship to their vision for the school and its multicultural mission. They planned a thematic unit from the curriculum so they could feel a real sense of how the curriculum would work, the materials needed to start, and areas of need for inservice. They also planned how to use a consultant (a teacher from another state who was using the curriculum).

In addition to spending a great deal of time at the copy machine preparing materials for teachers' inspection and analysis, Wiley encouraged staff to go to a national conference in another state that would focus on the curriculum, its users, and adaptations made by schools. Sixteen teachers and Wiley flew to the two-day conference at their own expense to attend general sessions and breakout sessions related to their own teaching assignments. Twice daily Wiley gathered them around the swimming pool to discuss their learnings and how to share them with their colleagues at home.

At various times in the curriculum search process, Wiley was seen by observers as "pushing" and at other times as showing patience and reassuring the staff that he was not unequivocally "for" this curriculum. His role in the process could best be described as "guide on the side" in contrast to "sage on stage," to borrow terms from the popular press. "Are you sure you want to do this?" he asked as they all became weary. "Yes," they said, "it's just that it's going to be a lot of work and we all need to commit to it." They did.

Creating a Learning Community at Dibert

Dibert was richly blessed with a series of talented and unique principals, each of whom was apparently the right person at the right time. Clif judged first principal, Lucianne as the "embodiment of tenacity and beauty." Her vision required that children be honored and respected for who they were and what they brought of themselves to school. Further, Lucianne's vision included children who respected and appreciated themselves, who had high self-esteem and self-regard. Lucianne, herself an artist, encouraged teachers to use the arts—visual and performing—to provide children with opportunities for self-expression that would lead to feelings of self-worthiness. Above all, she invested time, energy, and other resources in honoring teachers' capacity to honor the children.

Lucianne was seen as the, "quiet but forceful center of things." Teachers observed that Clif was the "energymeister," cheerleading and bringing about bonding of faculty and children. "He's a people person, going around talking with and touching everyone, connecting to them and connecting them with each other." Teachers without fail acknowledged his energy and the way he used it to turn the school around with a well-articulated and consistently enforced discipline process. Teachers studied the process

together in the early days of Faculty Study, and through this activity they bonded around a common goal.

Nancy's goals for the school included the achievement of increased teacher self-esteem and the empowerment of teachers, parents, and students. She promoted activities with parents that would recognize and show appreciation for teachers. Nancy freed teachers to devote their attention to professional development and innovative practices for children, practices they were empowered to develop themselves. By proactively streamlining procedures and processes, she was able to reduce administrivia and other distractions.

Each succeeding principal maintained the evolving culture—its values, beliefs, and operations—and added to it. Such was the case with Wiley, the current principal. Teachers reported that Wiley responded to the need to think about academics by promoting interest in looking critically at the academic program of the school. He imbued this examination with his own expertise in curriculum. Teachers credit him with furthering academics through his introduction of computer hardware and software. The qualities that described Dibert earlier remain in Wiley's administration; they have been institutionalized. For example, Morning Meeting still happens daily, "We meet as a family to start the day," explains Wiley. "It is a time when we can honor our students and applaud and celebrate their accomplishments."

In succession all four of these principals—the vision person, the people person, the empowering person, and the academic person—added important dimensions to Dibert. None of it could have happened as it did, with a widely held vision and shared decision making, without the structures and schedules that permitted the conversation to develop in the first place: Morning Meeting, where everyone in the school shares the first twenty minutes of the day; and Faculty Study, where faculty as a learning community continue to learn, grow, and improve their work with children.

John Dibert Elementary School sees itself as a family and a community of learners. Teachers are encouraged to innovate. They are involved in shared decision making, and they share a common vision of what the school should be and where it is headed. Reflection is encouraged. If conflict occurs, it is brought to the surface, shared openly, and resolved. The entire school learns together: students, teachers, parents, all. The school continually discovers how to create and change its reality.

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School Improvement Needs Assessment Survey

	Low				High
I. Clear School Mission	1	2	3	4	5
A. School/Districtwide* unity exists toward the mission of the school /district.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. Goals relating to the mission are clearly stated in writing and were developed from broad participatory involvement.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. Goals relating to the mission are regularly monitored, evaluated, and updated to maintain current relevance.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
D. The school/district goals are reviewed annually with new school board and staff members to maintain current relevance.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
E. Teachers, students, and administrators are provided with the necessary human and physical resources to carry out their mission responsibilities.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
F. Written sequential objectives have been developed in all content areas.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
G. Students spend five hours per week on homework assignments.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
II. Strong Instructional Leadership					
A. There is clear, strong instructional leadership from the principal/central office in this district/school; staff members know what is expected, where they're going, and how to get there.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. The principal/central office regularly involves the staff regarding instructional issues, programs, and new developments.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. The principal/central office has established a clear, fair, and consistent policy regarding all facets of the instructional program and personnel functions aimed at development and resolution.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
D. The principal/central office uses test results to recommend change and modification to the instructional program.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

* Where the term school/district is used, cross out the part that does not apply (i.e., if the survey is for a school, cross out district and vice versa). Do the same for principal/central office.

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
E. The principal/central office is sensitive to and supportive of staff needs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
F. The principal/central office has formal observation, evaluation, and follow-up procedures for rating and improving teacher performance.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
G. The principal/central office requires and regularly reviews lesson plans to evaluate their quality and relevance to the district goals, mission, and curriculum.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
H. The principal/central office encourages and provides the opportunity for staff development (workshops, conferences, release time).	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I. The principal/central office exhibits and encourages leadership that is in tune with current thinking and fosters creative involvement in the instructional programs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
J. The principal /central office encourages collaborative rather than directed leadership and involvement.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
III. School Learning Climate					
A. School administrators and staff work together in the decision-making process.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. School administrators and staff hold high expectations for student behavior; students are aware of these standards and know they will be held accountable.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. School administrators and staff hold high expectations for students' achievement; students are aware of and understand these expectations.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
D. Emphasis is placed on student time on task. Classroom interruptions are held to an absolute minimum.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
E. School personnel, students, and community members take pride in their school and its appearance.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
F. Teachers and students show respect for each other and enthusiasm for learning.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
G. Students are expected to master their subject matter.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Low				High
IV. Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time	1	2	3	4	5
A. The school/district has written policy and procedure relating to pupil attendance, truancy, and tardiness that is uniformly administered.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. Efforts are always sought to increase available time for instruction through more efficient time scheduling.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. Classroom interruptions are discouraged and kept to an absolute minimum for management procedures such as intercom messages, unnecessary moving about, and tardiness.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
D. Planned use of instructional aides, volunteers, and tutors is designed to increase instructional time on task.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
E. There has been a fairly recent attempt to assess how time is wasted and how engaged time can be effectively increased.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
V. High Pupil Expectations					
A. Teachers and administrators believe that all students—regardless of their social and economic background—can master subject matters at the competency levels established as the district standard.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. Teachers in the school/district hold consistently high expectations for all students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. Ninety-five percent or more of the students in this school/district can be expected to complete high school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
D. Students understand the high achievement expectations and react positively to that circumstance.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
E. This school/district encourages heterogeneous grouping and seldom separates students on the basis of ability or handicapping condition.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
F. The number of students from low-income families retained in a grade is proportionately the same as that of students from other income categories.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
G. There is a consistent pattern in this school/district that is evident from teacher to teacher as it relates to goals, mission, and high achievement expectations.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

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	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
H. Teacher lessons and classroom presentations are varied and take into consideration the individual differences of students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I. Student achievement is monitored regularly through appropriate test and measurement techniques.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
J. Parents are informed of and involved in the high achievement standards of the school/district.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

VI. Monitoring of Pupil Progress

A. In addition to report cards, the school/district has established regular procedures for notifying parents and students of student progress.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. The school/district uses a standardized testing program to measure school/district progress.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. The standardized tests match the curriculum of the school/district.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
D. The school/district uses the standardized test results to publicize and improve programs and performance.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
E. All staff members are provided test results and an appropriate interpretation of their meaning.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
F. The principal, staff, and central office personnel use tests and other assessment techniques as the basis for instituting change in curriculum and program thrust.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

VII. Parent and Community Involvement

A. The school/district encourages parent/community involvement through active committee assignments in broad areas of program/policy activities.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
B. The school/district has a wide range of activities available for parents to participate in.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
C. The school/district has a systematic procedure established to ensure that the affairs of the school/district are properly communicated to the parents and community.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
D. Parents and members of the community are used as volunteer aids and tutors.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
E. The community is considered and used as an educational resource in school/district programs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
F. Parents and community members are proud of their schools and support them at an appropriate level.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Source: School Improvement: A Resource and Planning Guide. Wisconsin Public Instruction Department, 1988.

Career Development Through the Maintenance, Enhancement, or Acquisition of Competencies

Boyatzis
Competency Acquisition Model

Strategies for Competency Acquisition	***Implications For Training/Learning And Reasonable Expectations for Outcomes***
Explication Participants engage in the study of the theoretical base or the rationale = **Recognition**, (Boyatzis *Step 1*). ⬇	**Implications for Training/Learning:** Lecture, self assessment exercise, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, panels, handouts. **Creates Awareness:** Participants can be expected to recall some specifics and generalizations. At this point in skill development, a few (5%) will be able to apply the skill. **Awareness is an essential step in the acquisition process.**
Modeling = **Understanding**, (Boyatzis *Step 2*). ⬇	**Implications for Training/Learning**: Trainer demonstrations, films, case studies, questions. **Promotes Comprehension**: Participants can be expected to more effectively discuss the skill and summarize, restate or explain it and infer need. A few (20%) will be able to apply the skill at the training site. **Modeling is an essential step in the acquisition process.**
Demonstration & Feedback Participants demonstrate/practice the new skill in a protected environment. Participants practice analysis of the behavior of others and offer recognition = **Self Assessment, Experimentation and Practice**, (Boyatzis *Steps 3, 4, and 5*). ⬇	**Implications for Training/Learning**: Structures must be provided so that participants will have the opportunity to demonstrate the skill in a safe environment. Trainers must have the skill to reinforce appropriate behavior, identify but dignify inappropriate responses, offer alternative positive behaviors, and maintain the self esteem of participants, i.e., use effective facilitation skills. **Completes Comprehension and Simulates Application: Participants can be expected to interpret the skill, illustrate or demonstrate the skill, recognize and evaluate the skill in others, and provide assistance for improving. At this point, most participants (up to 95%) will be able to demonstrate the skill at the training site, but the majority will not use this skill or competency at the work place without benefit of coaching and/or a support team. Practice/feedback is an essential step in the acquisition process.**
Coaching/Mentoring/Teaming Participants coach each other on-site as they work the new skill into their repertoire. They provide each other with ideas, feedback in the context of mentoring and coaching = **Job Application**, (Boyatzis *Step 6*).. ⬇	**Implications for Training/Learning**: Training must recognize the need for follow-up in terms of coaching and teaming and provide participants with the procedures or resources to develop teams or networks and to serve as effective coaches. **Completes Applications and Incorporates Analysis and Evaluation**: Most participants (75-95%) who are part of a school improvement team will apply the new skill at the school. Through the supportive process they will also analyze and evaluate the behavior of others and offer viable recommendations for improvement and in an acceptable way. **Coaching, mentoring and teaming are essential to full competency acquisition and institutionalization.**
Job Performance	

Sources: Developing Competence for Facilitating School Improvement with Implications for Training, prepared by Charles Ahearn and Betty Fry, Florida Department of Education, Florida Education Center, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 (1991) revised (1993) revised (1995). "Characteristics of Adult Learning," paper prepared by Theodore E. Andrews, Andrews-Bryant, Inc., 1239 S. Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20021 (1979). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, by Benjamin Bloom, Handbook I. Cognitive Domain. New York. McKay (1956). *Power in Staff Development* by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, ASCD Stock Number 611-83304 (1983). *The Competent Manager*, Richard Boyatzis, Wiley, New York (1982).

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Purposes of Career Development

Purpose	***Share Information***	***Acquire Skills***	***Institutionalize Improved Behavior***
Design of Delivery	Single Session of one to three hours	Multiple sessions of two to three hours	Multiple sessions varying lengths
Content	Independent topics	Related topics arranged sequentially	Interrelated topics
Number of Participants	No upper limit	"Controlled" ratio of participants to facilitators	"Controlled" ratio of participants to facilitators
Delivery Mode	Lecture, demonstration	Demonstration, active participants passive audience	All modes, both active and passive participation (practice, feedback)
Assessment of Effectiveness	Participants' rating of enjoyability or usefulness	Demonstration of skill(s)	Measurement of change in behavior and organizational outcomes

Adapted from Kennedy, L., Schmid, R., & McAdams, M. (1985). Inservice types and best practices. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 18, 33-38.

Components of Effective Career Development

Needs Assessed	**Plan to Address Needs**	**Check for Alignment with Organizational and Personal Vision**
Plan to Provide/Acquire Resources	**Delivery**	**Follow-Up/ Coaching**

Career Development

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Change in Workplace Practices

↓

Change in Organizational Outcomes

↓

Change in Employee Beliefs and Attitudes

↓

Change in Customer Satisfaction

↓

Change in Organizational Image

Adapted from: Guskey, T.R. (1986). A model of the process of teacher change. Educational Researcher, 15(5), 7, fig. 1.

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